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WASHINGTON

1989



ISBN 0-8444-0632-5  
ISSN 0887-8234

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents,  
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

**COVER,**  
Patrick McGoohan  
in Ibsen's *Brand*.





## The LC Mystery Case

THE SEARCH FOR PATRICK MCGOOHAN

by Barbara Pruett

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In a period when the generosity of our benefactors has brought so many culturally priceless materials and performances to the Library of Congress, it is fascinating to note a nineteenth-century view of such investments. John Thompson Ford, who in this annual is remembered for much more than owning the theater in which President Lincoln was assassinated, noted in 1879: "There is not so much appreciation of acting and singing in Baltimore now as there was thirty years ago. I attribute a part of this decline to the Peabody Investment. The late George Peabody . . . left about \$500,000 to endow an institute associated with which are concerts. Those concerts have come to be matters of enjoyment instead of education, and the young people go there to look at each other and be seen. The endowment has injured theatrical performances and been of very little good to the city." Washington audiences fared even worse in his view: "Northern clerks and employees to the number of about 20,000 fill up the Executive departments . . . They are thrifty saving people. No matter how small the amount they make they put at least half of it by and send it home to make an investment with it. A dollar to most of them looks as large as the side of a house. I have had to lease two theatres in Washington to get any control of the business." The 1987-1988 performance season at the Library was marked by events and endowments which provided both enjoyment and education and which even our thrifty counterparts of the last century could have appreciated without spending any of their "large" dollars.

A bequest of Hans Moldenhauer, who died in October 1987, has resulted in the greatest composite gift of music materials ever to be received by the Library's Music Division. It consists of a large quantity of autograph music manuscripts, letters, and documents spanning the history of musical creativity from the twelfth century to modern times. In 1988 the Moldenhauer Archives Foundation at the Library of Congress was established, and through its auspices more important manuscripts will be acquired and facsimiles of and writings about those already in the Archive will be published. It also provides for commissioning new music based on some work in the Archives.

An outstanding event of the 1987-1988 concert season in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium was the performance of two Gershwin musicals, *Primrose* and *Pardon My English*. This was the American premiere of *Primrose*, written in 1924 and originally produced in London. *Pardon My English* had not been heard since 1933. This unique performance was made possible by the discovery of a large number of manuscript scores, parts, and lyric sheets in a Warner Brothers warehouse in Secaucus, New Jersey, which enabled scholars to reconstruct for performance the scores of these two Gershwin musicals. Through the generosity of the Gershwin family over the years, the Library has an unparalleled collection of Gershwin materials, including George's and Ira's papers, George's library and desk, paintings, and the two Congressional Gold Medals posthumously awarded the Gershwin brothers in 1988.

Poetry readings at the Library are now being graced by our Poet Laureates. Robert Penn Warren was appointed the first Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry in 1986, and he has been followed in this post by Richard Wilbur (1987-1988) and Howard Nemerov (appointed in September 1988). The position carries no obligation whatever to "write an ode on the death of someone's kitten," as Warren handily put it, but we can look forward to their poetry being presented in the Coolidge Auditorium.

Our final contemplation of enjoyment and education in the Coolidge Auditorium concerns ballet. In this year's annual we complete the story of the creation of *Appalachian Spring*, as well as *Jeux de Printemps*, and *Hérodiade*—all of which premiered at the Library for Mrs. Coolidge's eightieth birthday in October of 1944. After having lived through the many delays and negotiations involved in the production of *Appalachian Spring* as well as after having received the Pulitzer prize in music for this work, Aaron Copland wrote, "So I think we can all congratulate ourselves on a happy ending."

Happy ending notwithstanding, in a future annual the tale will continue with the story of the fate of *Hérodiade* as a composition as well as a dance.

Iris Newsom



"I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered. My life is my own."

Patrick McGoochan as Number 6, *The Prisoner*

# THE

# LC MYSTERY CASE

THE SEARCH FOR PATRICK MCGOOCHAN



PATRICK MCGOOCHAN PLAYING THE LEAD IN HENRIK IBSEN'S *BRAND*. (*Theatre World*, May 1959.) Right: Patrick McGoochan attempts to escape from *The Prisoner* village in a helicopter, the only apparent means of travel to and from the mysterious village.



BY BARBARA PRUETT



LIFE IS FULL OF MYSTERIES. AMONG THE MOST fascinating of life's mysteries are the people who live it on their own terms. Enigmatic figures intrigue the world. Chronicles of the lives and careers of people who stand apart from the rest of society, who go their own way, can be found in every walk of life. Writers love to tell their stories as much as dreamers want to read them.

But there is another mystery story that is rarely told: the story of how to draw together the facts about the lives and careers of these special people. The special person who is the center of this particular story is actor Patrick McGoochan. The reason for the research was a magazine article I wanted to write that was to cover his









THE SHEFFIELD REPERTORY THEATRE IN 1945. PATRICK MCGOOHAN started his career here and stayed from 1948 to 1952. He followed this work with seasons at the Midland Theatre (Coventry) and the Old Vic (Bristol) before moving to work in films, television, and the London stage. Photo from *The Sheffield Repertory Theatre* by T. Alec Seed.

whole career and hopefully provide some insight into his life and thoughts as well.

This story started out as the search for facts about a film star and quickly developed into something better, a look at a man who is many things: a producer, director, scriptwriter, and private poet; an actor on the stage as well as in film and television. His is an international life and career: growing up in Ireland and England, early theater training at Sheffield and success on the London stage, television series in England, and films all over the world. It began in the United States (he was born in New York) and continues here today (he

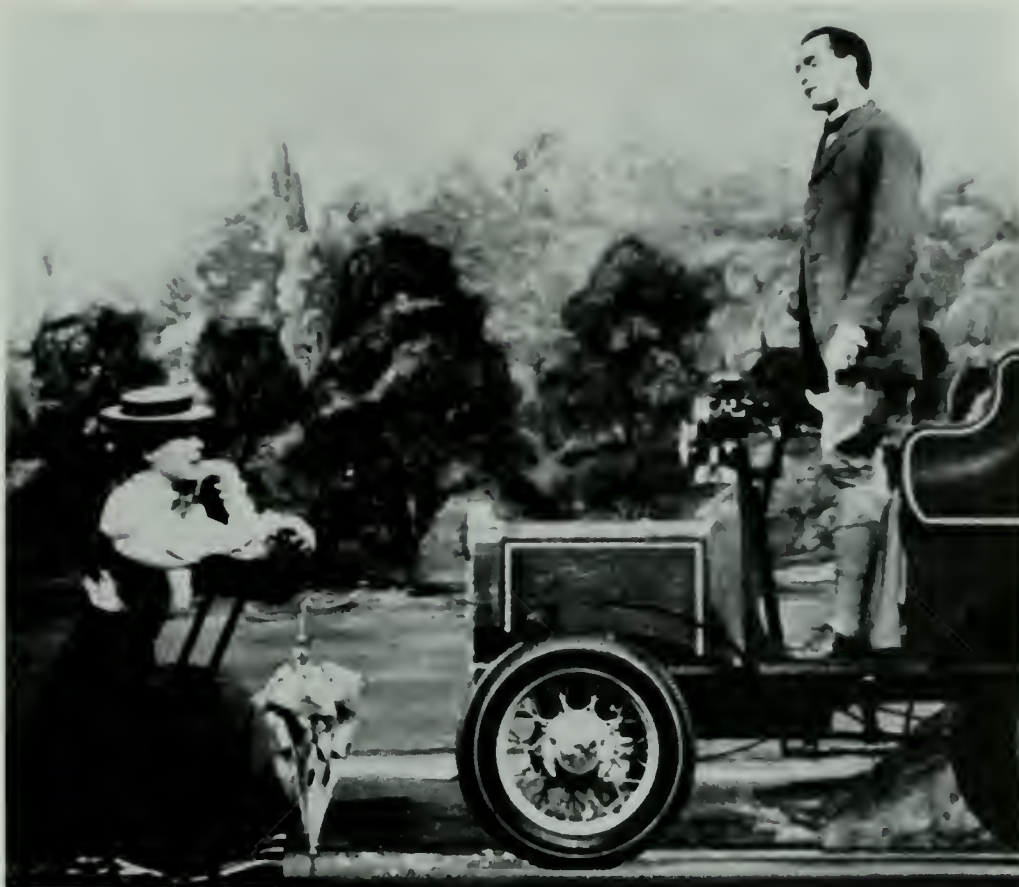
lives in California). He is strong-willed and independent in thought and action, distant and seclusive in an industry where the public eye is usually craved, and a caring father and husband who sometimes made career decisions based on the needs of his family. He is the father wanting a better life for his children and the husband proud of his wife's work and happy about the affection they still share after a lifetime together. In this respect, he could be a farmer in Indiana or an office worker in Boston.

## THE PRISONER

Patrick McGoohan is recognized by industry colleagues as a hard-working professional and an exceptionally creative and intelligent man, the force behind what many critics still call the best series ever on television (*The Prisoner*).

*The Prisoner* was first shown on the CBS network during the summer of 1968. It is a seventeen-episode series that was made in 1966–67 and continues to be televised internationally and is still written about reg-





A SCENE FROM SHAW'S *MAN and Superman* presented at the Sheffield Playhouse, October 8, 1951. Photo from *The Sheffield Repertory Theatre*.

ularly in newspapers and magazines. The whole series is currently a top-seller on videotape in both the United States and Europe. College educators have included it in their courses as a way of teaching their students about concepts of philosophy, sociology, and psychology. It is classic literature presented in a modern setting.

In its simplest form, it is the story of a man who angrily resigns from his job (apparently a top secret position), is kidnapped, and awakens to find himself held captive in a mysterious and isolated village where everyone has a number instead of a name. The leaders of this tightly controlled environment are intent on finding out why he resigned; and he, in turn, is determined to keep his secret and regain his freedom.

The ideas and philosophy that make up the concept are McGoohan's. He was the executive producer, leading actor, frequent director and scriptwriter, and editor of the finished product. I used this explanation from McGoohan in my article: "I believe passionately in the freedom of the individual and *The Prisoner* is basically about the dehumanizing, the loss of individuality, which is happening to all of us. People are the prisoners of our society. The series is a comment about life. *The Prisoner* idea was with me for many years before I put it together with Portmeirion and decided to do the series. The general theme of the man in isolation against authority and bureaucracy, the idea of being a rebel against suppression and stupid rules has been with me since I was able to start thinking about anything at all. This was not an action-adventure show. It was an allegory. An allegory is a story in which people, places, happenings hide and conceal a message. There is symbolism. It gives you a great deal of latitude to do

anything you want as long as you are true to the story within its general theme." McGoohan says that the only review he ever kept of the series evaluated it in literary terms.

The Library of Congress has the best collection of *Prisoner* information in the United States, and it is being used. The collection includes the copyright deposit film copies of all seventeen segments of the series, scripts for each episode, press packets from ITC (Incorporated Television Company), film stills, reviews from over the years, articles about the series (some in foreign languages), long commentaries about the series, televised and published interviews with McGoohan, and a great deal of discussion about what it all meant.

## DEVELOPING THE PLOT

As a librarian, I have always felt that the proper metaphor for the research process was a recognition of the detective nature of the work. The skeptical detective mind is the basic implement with which one works. The ability to collect information methodically is the key to good detective work. Each bit of information is a clue, a step to uncovering a story or reaching its end. Sometimes the clues lead to other facts or send you off in new directions; sometimes you discover the secret itself. Others liken the process to the fitting together of the many small pieces of a puzzle that have been torn apart and scattered in different and unrelated locations.

So this is largely a detective mystery, the telling of a research tale—of the adventures and the gritty work it takes to put together the background information for



## PATRICK MCGOOHAN

was born in New York in 1928, and after a few years in Ireland came to England with his parents in 1937. By the time he joined the Sheffield Repertory at the age of twenty as a student, he had worked in a bank, been a chicken farmer, and driven a truck. After four years at Sheffield, where he became leading actor in the company, he went for a season to the Midland Theatre, Coventry, and then to the Bristol Old Vic for another two seasons. His first West End engagement was at the Garrick Theatre, where he played the lead in Philip King's success-



ful play, 'Serious Charge'. He then played Starbuck in Orson Welles' production of *Moby Dick* at the Duke of York's Theatre, and after making the film 'High Tide at Noon' was offered a contract by the Rank Organisation, with whom he stayed for two years, playing leading roles in several recent Rank productions. During the last six months of 1958 he starred in many television plays, notably in 'All my Sons' for Granada T.V., 'The Greatest Man in the World', 'The Big Knife', and 'Dead Secret'. He played St. Just in 59 Theatre Company's production of 'Danton's Death' at the Lyric Opera House, Hammer-smith, earlier this year, and has just returned from Canada, where he played the lead in C.B.C.'s television production of 'The Iron Harp'.

the publication of an article about the career of an actor. Although Mr. McGooohan is the lead player in this particular drama, the basic research process can be used as a model to follow in researching any performer in the film industry.

Our research story begins simply, almost accidentally. I went to the Library of Congress Motion Picture and Television Reading Room, in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division (M/B/RS), to do some reading for my own interest. A few weeks before, the Maryland Public Television System (MPT) had started rerunning *Secret Agent* each week-night and *The Prisoner* on the weekend. I realized I had been watching Patrick McGooohan on the screen for years but knew nothing about him. Now was the time to read a couple of articles, perhaps find the titles of a few additional works to see, and that would be the end of it.

The first indication that things might go slightly awry came when I could not find exactly what I wanted to read: the simple article, or combination of articles, that would tell me about the man's overall career and a little about what he was like as a person. I knew what I wanted must be there somewhere; surely it would only take a little more searching and effort on my part.

### PROGRAMME

#### BRAND

by

HENRIK IBSEN

translated by

MICHAEL MEYER

LYRIC OPERA HOUSE

HAMMERSMITH · W ·

Library

J. BAXTER SOMERVILLE

**BRAND PROGRAM COVER.** THIS IBSEN PLAY WAS produced at the Lyric Opera House in April 1959. Still regarded as the definitive presentation, it is the story of a pastor dedicated to living with uncompromising commitment to his values, regardless of personal cost. The biographical program notes contain a good summary of McGooohan's previous credits. The *London Times* headlined its review "a magnificent performance," and his interpretation of the title role won McGooohan the London Drama Critics Award as the best stage actor of 1959. *Brand* was also telecast on BBC in August 1959 and a film of this show has been retained in its archives.





IT WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS after *Brand* before McGoochan appeared on the stage again. His return also marked his first appearance on the Broadway stage when he took the role of Stewart in *Pack of Lies*, which opened in New York in February 1985. Photo by Martha Swope Studio.

I did not find what I wanted so I decided to write it myself.

Once I made that decision, the whole focus of my work changed. The first step was to find a publisher, and that was accomplished easily enough when Sam Rubin, editor of *Classic Images*, approved my proposal. The piece was originally conceived to include a filmography and enough historical and biographical material to provide a balanced overview of McGoochan's life and career. I emphasize the word *balanced* because there is a preponderance of material about Patrick McGoochan in relation to *Secret Agent* and *The Prisoner* series, at the expense of his other achievements. That balance would be what I would go for, the career retrospective that would recognize the totality of McGoochan's career. It does not diminish the importance of *The Prisoner* to say I felt I had found a far more interesting man than the one I saw in articles covering only this one phase of his career. To the contrary, I came to understand *The Prisoner* much better as I grew in my knowledge of the man's beliefs, style, and previous work. His hand is in every aspect of the series: the expression of ideas, scriptwriting, acting, directing, producing, editing, camera work, and music. What he did not do himself, he controlled. And once

you know him, you realize how much it shows. It is important to recognize, however, that those creative and technical skills were sharpened throughout his early years of work, and it was those years of development that set the stage for this particular success.

There were hundreds of articles and reviews (I knew there would be thousands if I wanted to spend the time looking for them) over the years, but each article or brief interview I found covered only his current project or his previous television series. There were no long introspective interviews—not one. But enough information existed in each individual article that, taken together, they painted a picture of a fascinating person. Sam and I had estimated my article would be perhaps two or three pages in length. In one of those unanticipated plot twists, the length of the piece grew steadily over the months of research and in the end became a three-part series covering nearly fifteen pages and including twenty pictures.

I found *Classic Images* in the M/B/RS Reading Room. The librarian there provided some background information on the publication and discussed the publishing styles of several others I might want to consider.

The next step was to give some thought to my audience. Whether you are writing an article, directing a





MCGOOHAN IN HIS DRESSING ROOM AT THE OPENING OF *PACK OF LIES*.  
*Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division.*



film, or singing on a stage, you must know your audience because they are the final critics of your work. Before I started the article, I did an informal survey among friends and professional colleagues (none of whom are writers or film buffs) to get a perspective on how I should approach it and to find out how well Patrick McGooohan was known and how familiar his work was. Interestingly enough, virtually everyone I talked to came up with something they liked—the surprise was that people named so many different titles and knew so much. One friend wanted to know if I had seen *Silver Streak*, another mentioned *Scanners*, and another could speak knowledgeably of the “Oth-





A SCENE FROM *THE PRISONER*, FILMED IN THE WELSH SEASIDE RESORT of Portmeirion.



cret Agent in the United States.) But the audience went beyond those two popular television series and, in fact, it was apparent that they knew more than I did. I had some catching up to do.

It is impossible to walk into a library (even the Library of Congress) and find everything about an actor located in one place in a nice neat package. That is what researchers want, but it cannot be done. In fact, if you look up Patrick McGoochan's name in the main card catalog of LC, you will find that he is not there. But a large amount of information is actually in LC; it just takes a commitment of time and effort to find and assemble it. This is what I feel is the core of the research process—the ability to see interrelationships.

My research constantly changed direction as I realized McGoochan was involved in many fields of interest. By the end of the project, the research process had become very complex indeed and the trail led through the halls of the Library of Congress and opened the doors to almost every major division. It became a world tour of four decades of film, theater, and television literature and it gave me the chance to view nearly a lifetime of his work.

## FALSE LEADS

We all know that not everything in print is true. But when we collect information during the research process, how do we determine what is not true? At the beginning of the research project, when the researcher still lacks a depth of knowledge about a subject, it is virtually impossible. That is where the skeptical detective's mind saves you. No one with any research experience accepts a statement as being accurate. Everything is suspect. As much or more time can be spent

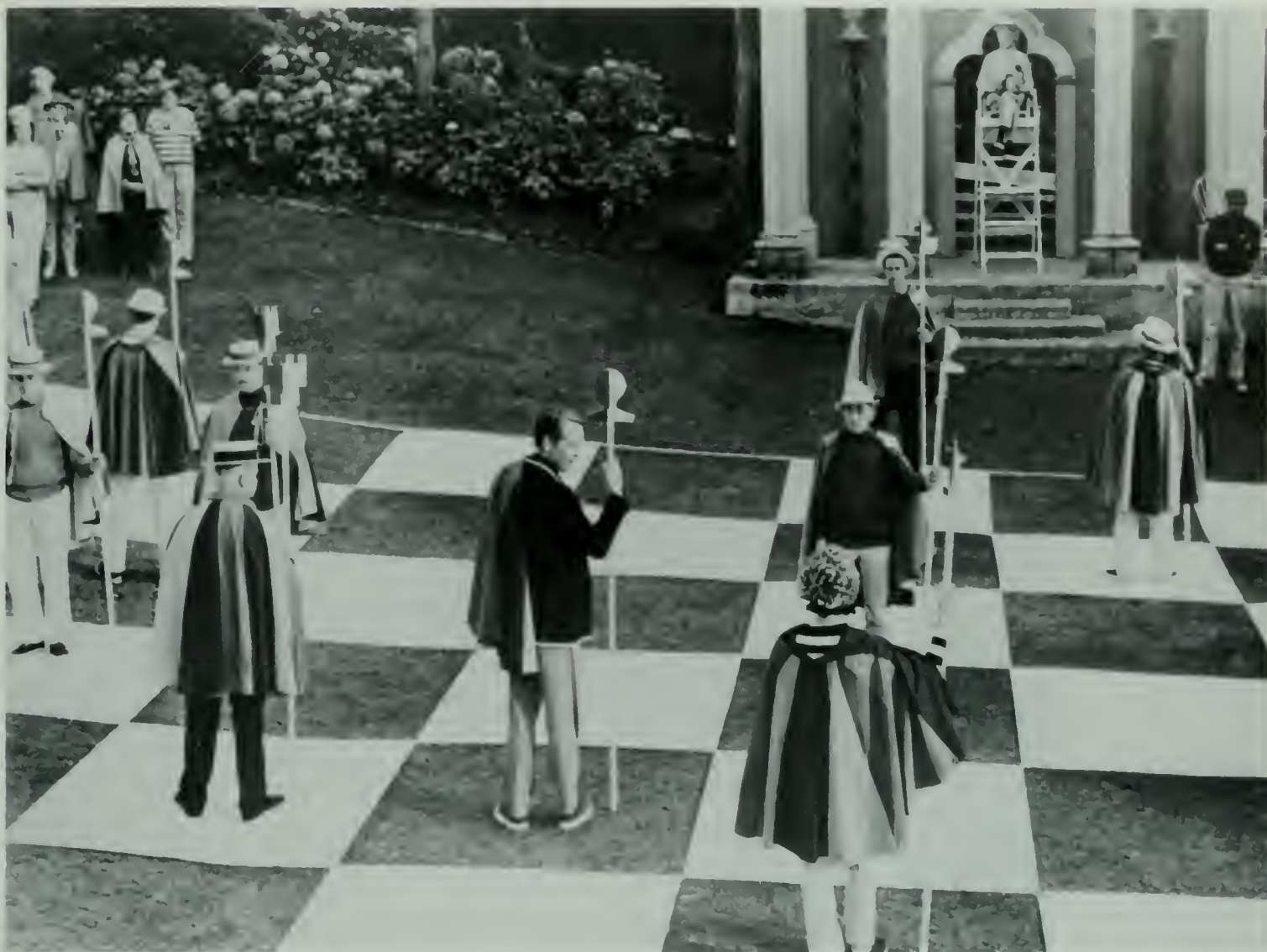
ello" theme of *All Night Long* and the religious conflicts of *Walk in the Shadow*. Three people were adamant about proclaiming the Walt Disney film *Dr. Syn, Alias the Scarecrow* an absolute favorite. Of course, everyone had watched *The Prisoner* series at least once, and most had seen *Secret Agent*. Strangely, there was confusion over *Secret Agent*. Some people remembered it as a half-hour series and others, such as I, remembered it as an hour in length. (That mystery was solved during the early stages of my research. Under the title *Danger Man* it was a half-hour series in 1960–1961; it was an hour-long series in 1964–1965 that was called *Danger Man* in England and Se-





IN THE EDITING ROOM DURING  
production of *The Prisoner*.  
Photo from *Six of One*, Spring  
1986. Motion Picture,  
Broadcasting, and Recorded  
Sound Division.





A HUMAN CHESS GAME WAS ONE OF THE MANY WAYS THE VILLAGERS entertained themselves in their captive environment in *The Prisoner*.

trying to track down false leads as is spent on the valid ones. By the time you realize you are on a false trail, the mistake can become quite costly.

I found three birth dates for Patrick McGooohan the first day I started my research. One was clearly wrong because I found it used only one time; the other two (March 19 and May 19, 1928) were used interchangeably in several of the first publications I picked up. I settled on the March 19 date eventually because it was the most frequently used and showed up in authoritative sources such as *Who's Who in America*. As it turned out, the alternate date was probably mistakenly derived from his wedding date: he was born March 19 (1928) and married May 19 (1951).

As your research expands and your collection of print material grows, you become more aware of the inconsistencies and errors in those articles. They may be typing errors (such as incorrect dates) or errors picked up from other sources and perpetuated (a story about another actor in the *Washington Post* listed McGooohan as one of the stars of a film I would later find he never heard of or agreed to make). And some

are plainly works of fiction. I am sure Mr. McGooohan would be surprised to learn he has been divorced (he and his wife have been married since 1951—no divorce in either background) and that he has a college-age son (there is no son—he does have three daughters). Then there are the statements and quotes that could not possibly have been made because they fly in the face of everything the man has said or is known to believe. Writers who talk about a relationship between the fictional characters of John Drake (*Secret Agent*) and Number 6 (*The Prisoner*) simply have not done their homework. McGooohan has spent the last twenty years denying that there is any connection between the two characters. He says “Number Six wasn’t John Drake”; it is as simple as that.

In order to avoid such inaccuracies, whenever possible, use authoritative sources such as *Who's Who in America* or some other source where the text is compiled from information supplied by the performer, his agent, or a source that is credited; stick as close to primary sources as possible, such as direct interviews or production information that is provided by the companies (even then, remember that all performers complain, often bitterly, of the inaccuracies of printed interviews); and do enough background research so that you can identify the most used version. You still may end up getting some of it wrong, but at least you will be able to cite your sources.



*SECRET AGENT (DANGER MAN IN ENGLAND)* was the first British series to be successful in the United States. The popularity of this early spy series won McGoohan the offer to be the first James Bond, a role he turned down then and several times afterwards.



A common problem of working with films that have been released in more than one country is that the titles and the release dates vary. In large part, the literature fails to tell you this. American reviews of the film will not tell you that *Elephant Gun* was called *Nor the Moon by Night* when it was first released in England. Nor can you easily discover that *Life for Ruth* became *Walk in the Shadow* in the United States, and that the release dates differed by several years. The film *Dr. Syn, Alias the Scarecrow* was also shown on television as a three-part Walt Disney serial, *The Scarecrow of Romney Marsh* (which included scenes not shown in the film). A working title (a title assigned to a film under production) is not necessarily the final release title by which a film will be known, but all publicity (such as articles, interviews, and press releases) generated at the prerelease stage will refer to this initial title. *Trespases* was titled *Finding Katie* right up to the point of release, and all of the production publicity refers to *Finding Katie*.

Problems surrounding dates are difficult to reconcile since there are a number of valid dates, depending on the circumstances. The date of production, date of copyright, and dates of release in different countries can vary substantially. It is not uncommon for films to be made several years before their release in theaters or before they are broadcast on television. *Jamaica Inn* was made in 1982 and broadcast in 1985; *Trespases*





MCGOOHAN DURING A  
press conference  
introducing *The  
Prisoner* to the  
media in 1967.











*DR. SYN, ALIAS THE SCARECROW* (1963) WAS BOTH A FILM AND A THREE-part Walt Disney television series. Copyright © Walt Disney Productions 1964. World Rights Reserved.





was made and copyrighted in 1983 and released in New Zealand in January of 1984 but has not yet been released in the United States; *Kings and Desperate Men* was made in Canada in December of 1977 and has several different official release dates as a result of being shown at film festivals in 1981, 1982, and 1984 in different countries. It enjoyed a popular theater release period in England in 1985 and is available on videotape in that country, and was released on video in this country in April 1989. All of this, of course, plays havoc with the research process and requires a dogged persistence in tracking down the facts. These dates must all be taken into account when searching the indexes. Regretfully, the journals and indexes themselves contribute to the problem because of the lag between the time information is published in a journal and the time it is included in an index.

Add to this list of complications the fact that McGoohan's approach to publicity about his life and wide-ranging career interests is geared to his own per-

MCGOOHAN WITH SUSAN HAMPSHIRE IN ANOTHER DISNEY FILM, *The Three Lives of Thomasina*. She later appeared in two episodes of *Secret Agent*. Copyright © Walt Disney Productions 1963. World Rights Reserved.



sonal beliefs and style, and you have a researcher's nightmare. I did not know it at the start of my research, but McGoohan is adamant about maintaining his privacy, does interviews only as an absolute necessity, and cares little for publicity. This helps explain why the insight one would like to see in the volume of literature for a man of his stature is not there. There is a lot written about him, but very little of it was written with his cooperation. I eventually realized that, in large part, it was by his own intention that I could not find the kind of article I wanted to read.





A FIGHT IN A PUB during *The Quare Fellow*, characteristic of Behan's stories.



MCGOONHAN STARRED AS THE young prison guard in the film version of Brendan Behan's *The Quare Fellow*.









THE ONLY RANK ORGANIZATION FILM IN WHICH MCGOOHAN PLAYED A hero and romantic figure (game warden Andrew Miller). Released as *Nor the Moon by Night* in England in 1958 and *Elephant Gun* in the United States in 1959, the making of the movie in Africa was fraught with a series of misfortunes. McGoohan himself suffered a jeep accident which left him unconscious by a roadside for hours before he was found and hospitalized for several days.



## PATRICK MCGOOHAN IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress is a several-block complex of buildings and underground storage facilities and tunnels. Thousands of employees work there, which makes it bigger in both size and population than the town where I grew up in rural Indiana. Although researchers are not allowed into the stacks that house millions of books and journals, they can use the resources of LC through a series of reading rooms. Each reading room is, in fact, a large reference collection dedicated to a specialized subject area with a staff of specialists in that field. These are the rooms we will explore in our search for information and in our attempt to solve our research mystery.

The first step was to identify the work McGoohan did over the years and compile a chronology of significant events. For many performers, there are biographies that provide quick and easy answers to these questions. For McGoohan there was none. However, there were several other ways to accomplish this task.

## THE MAIN CARD CATALOG AND THE GENERAL REFERENCE COLLECTION

When I did the first part of my research in the Main Reading Room of LC, it contained the giant card catalog and the main reference collection. However, this whole area was closed during 1988 due to a renovation project, and the card catalog was moved to a temporary location. But most of the information in it has already been incorporated into the two computer systems that are available to patrons: SCORPIO can be searched by author or title and MUMS can be searched by author, title, and subject. MUMS is the more complete system; a number of subsystems can be accessed through it. MUMS will allow you to search the collections of some of the divisions, including M/B/RS. The extensive reference collections that resided in alcoves around the Great Hall have also been moved to other areas of the Library.

Most of my research was done in M/B/RS, where its reference staff provided a brief overview of the collection and some assistance in planning the direction of my efforts by guiding my searching, advising on the possible location of additional information throughout LC, and explaining some of the confusing mass of rules, organizational complexities, and forms that hold the world's largest library together.

There are two major frustrations of researching in the film and television industries: very little of the total body of literature is indexed and there is almost no overlap in motion picture and television reference sources. Both of these problems make it extremely difficult to pull together the particulars about the career of a performer who has been successful in several fields, as is the case for Patrick McGoohan.

There is also an interesting "catch 22" here: many of these publications can be searched only by film title or by the name of the producer or director, not by the names of actors. Therefore, these sources cannot be used until you have the titles in hand. Clearly, if you are researching an actor, the most valuable publications will be those which include the names of actors in their indexes.

Even though I used such indexes as the *Film Literature Index* and the *New York Times Index* as a source in compiling personal information (by looking up McGoohan's name), I returned to them again once I had the list of film titles and searched for those. I could now ask the right questions and effectively investigate the special collections within M/B/RS.

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS WITHIN THE MOTION PICTURE, BROADCASTING, AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

### COPYRIGHT DESCRIPTIVE MATERIAL

M/B/RS receives the Copyright Office deposit copies of films along with accompanying descriptive material such as press books, stills, or scripts. Although the transferral of the descriptive material is automatic, the transferral of the film itself is not. M/B/RS must indicate its desire to receive each title on an individual basis. Because of this unique arrangement, M/B/RS has the only remaining evidence of the existence of some very early films that have long since disappeared. Only two of the thirteen segments of *Rafferty* are in M/B/RS. And the film *Trespases* was caught in a drawn-out copyright process and did not become a part of the M/B/RS collection until recently. I was able to view it only a few days before I completed my article, when the producer himself loaned me a copy.

### FILM STILLs, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND OTHER VISUALS

There are two ways to access the film stills files. A recent laser disk pilot program allowed M/B/RS to place its stills up to 1983 on videodisk. Any stills which





MCGOOHAN WITH WALTER MACKEN (AS THE RETIRING PRISON WARDEN) in *The Quare Fellow*. The film was released in England in 1963 and the United States in 1963 and 1966; it was copyrighted in 1962. Consequently, information can be found in newspapers for each of those years calling it a new release.







arrived in the division after that date are not on the disk. Amazingly, nearly the full collection is now available on two sides of a single disk, indexed by title. It is a speedy system and what you see on the disk is almost as high in quality as the real photo. Stills for film after film can be searched in seconds, and there is no need to look through various cabinets or wait for the staff to retrieve the files for you. The actual stills continue to be filed in locked storage cabinets and can be used upon request if there is a need to see the actual photo.

The division also has other visuals, such as press books and lobby cards. Movie posters can be found across the hall in the Prints and Photographs Division. M/B/RS maintains a current list of shops around the country that sell movie memorabilia. I used the list to purchase stills from such diverse places as New York (*Secret Agent* and *The Prisoner*), Los Angeles (a shop specializing in Disney memorabilia had stills from three films), and Oklahoma (a still from *Two Living, One Dead*).

If you are looking for photographs to use with your article, look at the photo credits in published articles. One thing you can be sure of, the photographer took more photos than were used.

My detective skills were most sorely strained in trying to locate recent photos of McGoohan. It is much easier to find older photos of him, but even then there are virtually no candid photos around, just film stills. After a considerable amount of searching, I was able to locate four sources of photos taken within the last five years; two came from contacting photographers of photos I saw in magazines. While on location for *Trespases* in 1983, McGoohan and his wife had interviewed for the *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, and the photos taken for the article were available to be used, with permission and credit, for my series. Another New Zealand source was the producer of *Trespases*, who kindly provided a series of stills on very short notice. The second magazine photographer who proved helpful was Jean Strongin, a New York photographer who had taken photos for a *Video* magazine article. Only one of her photos had been used by *Video*, but she had others and I was able to use a photo that had never been published before. Lastly, I was able to acquire photos from the Martha Swope Studio. She took the publicity photos for McGoohan's Broadway play, *Pack of Lies*. The Strongin and Swope photos were taken in 1985 and were used by contractual agreement and payment of a fee.

Newspapers are another source. Photos in newspapers are often taken by in-house photographers or purchased from a service. Someone at the newspaper can usually provide assistance in tracking down the source of the photo for you. The public relations offices of film companies will often supply stills for publicity purposes, although I must admit to erratic success with this approach. In some cases, the performers' agents provide photos for professional purposes. There are also a number of commercial photographers of celebrities, but I was unsuccessful in finding anyone else who had photos of McGoohan.





ANOTHER RANK FILM, *THE GYPSY AND THE GENTLEMAN*, WITH McGoochan playing Melina Mercouri's gypsy lover.



## FILM REVIEWS

M/B/RS clips and files (by title) reviews for every feature and made-for-television film it can find. Sources clipped regularly include: *Variety*, the *New York Times*, and other newspapers and periodicals.

## SUBJECT FILES

M/B/RS does maintain some subject files on performers, special industry topics, and some of the more pop-

ular film or television programs. It now has files that include material about Patrick McGoochan, *Secret Agent*, and *The Prisoner*.

## THE FILM COLLECTION

The most important part of the M/B/RS collection is, of course, the films themselves. The collection actually includes feature films, television productions, and privately donated films. They are in a variety of formats: 35mm, 16mm, videotape (including PAL), and other, less common sizes and types.

One of the pleasures of doing this sort of project is the chance to see films not otherwise available. Which of Patrick McGoochan's films are in the Library of Con-



MCGOOGHAN AS JAMES STUART (WITH VANESSA REDGRAVE) IN *Mary, Queen of Scots* (1971). They appeared together again in the 1985 TV PBS miniseries *Three Sovereigns for Sarah*.





MCGOOHAN WAS OFFERED ONE OF THE starring roles in *Ice Station Zebra* during the final production stages of *The Prisoner* in 1967 and interrupted that schedule in order to make his first Hollywood film. One episode of *The Prisoner* had to be made without him: "Do Not Forsake Me" dealt with his absence from the London series by a mind-transferral story wherein his mind was placed in the body of another person.



gress? Once again, the information in the M/B/RS card catalog is not listed by the name of the actor, but rather by the title of the film. Among the titles in the collection are most of the early Rank films, the Swedish film *Two Living, One Dead, All Night Long*, the three *Columbo* episodes (he won an Emmy for *By Dawn's Early Light*), two episodes of *Rafferty*, all episodes of *The Prisoner*; also *Ice Station Zebra*, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, and the New Zealand film *Trespasses*. There is a complete set of the thirty-nine episodes of the 1960 *Danger Man* series, but the division has no copies of the hour-long *Secret Agent* series that followed. The color prints of *Elephant Gun* and *The Gypsy and the Gentleman* are faded but otherwise in good shape, the print of *All Night Long* is excellent, and the mint copy of *Two Living, One Dead* is so sharp that it looks as if the actors are alive on stage.

The Swedish film was filed in the M/B/RS card catalog by its native title (*Tva Levande Och En Dod*), not

the English-language title. I would never have found it on my own; it was called to my attention after I questioned why it was not in the collection when I thought it should have been there. That is why you need to learn to ask questions of the librarians who know the collections. There is now a cross-reference card.

If you do not understand something or cannot find what you are looking for, ask the library staff. Every library has its own collection of special files, pamphlets, visuals, or other types of "hidden" information that is not in the card catalog and therefore not easily found by inexperienced patrons. Regardless of how good a researcher you consider yourself, there are always these special collections that may be missed, and the staff of each division is best equipped to direct you to the resources that will be valuable to your work.

Again, researching is not as simple as it sounds and you need to move freely back and forth between various reference collections in the different divisions in





WITH ROCK HUDSON IN *ICE STATION ZEBRA*. MCGOOHAN describes Hudson as a gentleman and a big star who treated him with absolute courtesy during the making of the film.





MCGOOHAN'S NEXT FILM WAS THE OFFBEAT *THE MOONSHINE WAR* (here with Richard Widmark) in which he played a Southern Prohibition revenue officer.



order to be effective. It was time for me to travel to new territory, the other divisions of LC.

## THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE

The Copyright Office came into the picture one afternoon when I had reached a temporary dead end regarding the name of the television series McGoochan did in 1977. I could not remember the name of it even though I could remember seeing it. I could not look it up in any source I had found so far because I had no title. So I decided it was finally time to tackle the Copyright Office. The work needed to be done eventually and it was my last resort on this topic.

I always stand in awe of that place. It is a huge room, half the size of a city block. As you enter through the main door, there is a long row of computers stretching across the front of the room. Behind the computers, filling up the rest of the room, are rows of card catalogs, about five feet high, as far as the eye can see. To the timid, it is a scene that belongs in a modern



SCENES FROM *BRASS TARGET* IN WHICH MCGOOHAN PLAYED COL. Mike McCauley, a U.S. Army officer involved in a conspiracy.







horror film about science gone amuck. But it is not as forbidding as it seems. All copyright records since 1978 are on the computer. Before 1978, the records are still on cards although this will change as work progresses on the automated system. Hidden in the millions of three-by-five cards and computer records, you will find the documentation for the creative life of America.

What can you expect to find and how can you find it? The key words here are: author, title, publisher, and claimant. Once again, the actor's name is not indexed (unless he or she holds one of the positions just mentioned). A copyright record is a legal declaration of the title of a work: it tells who created the work, who published it, who owns the right to receive payment for its use, and the dates of copyright and publication. The





MCGOOCHAN APPEARED IN HIS THIRD DISNEY FILM WHEN HE MADE *Baby . . . Secret of the Lost Legend* in 1985.

purpose of the copyright catalog, therefore, is not the same as of the card catalog (which is designed to tell you how to find a publication in the collection); it serves as an official record of a copyright claim. I find it most useful for verifying dates.

Patrick McGoochan's name was there because of his role as a producer or director. And, happily, so was the name of the series title I was seeking, *Rafferty*. The actual record under McGoochan's name was for the one episode he directed. Once I had the series title, I

looked up the series itself and found the titles of all of the episodes. From there, I could return to M/B/RS with the information I needed to use some of the books previously mentioned. There was also the copyright record for *The Prisoner* because of his role as producer and director.

Other copyrighted material associated with Patrick McGoochan's work, but not indexed under his name, ranged from the copyright of the films he made and products associated with the series (*Secret Agent* and *The Prisoner* books), to a wide assortment of music. I learned, for example, that the theme from *Danger Man* was called "High Wire" and was copyrighted in the United States in 1964, the song "Secret Agent Man" as sung on the show was copyrighted in 1965





MCGOOHAN WITH HIS WIFE JOAN, ON LOCATION FOR *TRESPASSES* IN NEW ZEALAND IN LATE 1982.

He describes their thirty-seven-year marriage: "My wife and I have one of the most romantic marriages. We're more in love today than when we were married. We're very romantic sort of people, I think. I'm lucky. Extremely lucky." They met at Sheffield in 1949 and married in 1951. Photo courtesy of *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, February 1983 issue.



(the song itself holds a separate copyright), and the Ron Grainer music from *The Prisoner* was copyrighted in 1967. Some eyebrow raisers also appeared: there was one piece of music named "McGoohan's Blues," and a rock song called "I Helped Patrick McGooohan Escape." Because none of the products or music had any direct impact upon the story I was writing, there was no follow-up research. But I kept a record of my Copyright research in case any of this information took on a special importance at a later date or was needed as filler in the event I failed to come up with enough material.

There are searching problems. Again, this is a situation where you have to know what you are looking for before the files can be used effectively. Unfortunately,

there are no subject cards like those you would find in a library card catalog. You will have to have at least one piece of information (and an approximate date) that will be likely to show up in a record. My shot-in-the-dark success with *Rafferty* was the exception, not the rule. Secondly, there are no explanatory details to help you distinguish similar records from each other. *The Prisoner* is something of a classic literary title that has been used for books, stage plays, other television productions, and songs. The same is true on a smaller scale for *Secret Agent*. Unless you know something about the work involved, it can be nearly impossible to tell whether or not a particular copyright record has anything to do with your subject. I never could figure out if a fabric design copyrighted in 1966 as "'Secret Agent' [items used by spies]" actually had anything to do with the series.



## THE RECORDED SOUND REFERENCE CENTER AND THE MUSIC DIVISION

If I had wanted to follow up the leads for the music clues, the next step would have been a trip to the Recorded Sound Reference Center in the Performing Arts Reading Room (PARR) for recordings. Sheet music and other materials are housed in the Music Division and can be requested at its PARR. The Music Division also has its own collection of abstracts and indexes that could have been checked for additional information.

## THE NEWSPAPER AND CURRENT PERIODICALS READING ROOM

This reading room offers a feast of current information, almost more than you can absorb. Its reference collection contains newspaper indexes from all the major cities in the United States and around the world, with the newspapers themselves in hard copy or on microfilm. It has full collections of the *London Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *New York Times*. Especially helpful is the *National Newspaper Index*. What you can expect to find in newspapers are current events (such as award nominations, political activities, and personal appearances), reviews, interviews, and photos.

Of course, you must learn the peculiarities of the indexing system for each newspaper. You can look in the index to the *London Times* under McGoohan's name and find virtually nothing. But in reality it is all there: the reviews for the London plays of the 1950s, the television shows of the 1950s and 1960s, and the films for nearly forty years. But these appearances are only indexed by the title of the work. There are occasional rare items: one thing I did find under his name was a brief article only a few paragraphs long telling about a series of African documentaries he backed financially and worked on with fellow actor Kenneth Griffith. I found no other mention of this in the rest of my research.

The journal collection is worthy of recognition too, and it is in this reading room that you can request many of the journals that are stored in the stacks of LC.

## THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY READING ROOM

My next trip was to the Science and Technology Reading Room for a look at the *Nielsen Ratings*. I wanted to check out the ratings for the summer of 1968 when *The Prisoner* was first shown. The ratings that have been published up through 1977 are housed in the Science and Technology Reading Room while the recent volumes of the ratings (1978 to date) are kept in other locations throughout the Library. M/B/RS keeps a file of weekly clippings of the ratings at its reference desk.

## THE BILLY ROSE THEATRE COLLECTION OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Up to this point, I had compiled as complete a list of McGoohan's work as I could, checked the reviews, and searched newspaper and periodical indexes for articles and interviews. But I knew I did not have enough. His theater years had remained an unsolved mystery. I was not quite sure where to turn. I had hit a plateau, and had been on it for about a week, when a chance occurrence got the pace moving again rapidly: finding the Billy Rose Theatre Collection when I was in New York for a library conference. The New York Public Library maintains the Performing Arts Research Center as part of the cultural Lincoln Center performing arts complex. The theater collection is an important part of this unique branch library.

Their historical theater collection is breathtaking. But, like the Library of Congress, the information I needed did not come wrapped in a single package. Once the play titles were identified, I could go to their card catalog and find a file that contained information on virtually every play he did. Back issues of the monthly and annual editions of *Theatre World* (London) were the most useful sources for compiling the play list. Much of their collection is contained in specially created files, a painstaking task carefully continued over the decades. They have files on thousands of plays (and the various presentations over the years for each play). Their collection includes original programs, photographs, posters, reviews that have been clipped from a variety of sources, correspondence and private papers of theater personalities, and other memorabilia. They had two files on McGoohan himself: one contained articles clipped from journals both in the United States and England; the other file was full of photographs. In addition, they also had film and television files that contained reviews and publicity materials about most of his films as well as film still files that contained some photos not in the LC collection. Most of this information supplemented, rather than duplicated, the information I had found at the Library of Congress. *Theatre World* is actually in the LC collection as is T. Alec Seed's *The Sheffield Repertory Theatre: A History*, but I originally discovered them both in New York.

I also discovered in New York that McGoohan had played the role of Starbuck in Orson Welles's version of *Moby Dick* on the London stage in 1955. Once I knew about McGoohan's role in the play, I expanded my work to include some research on Welles at the Library of Congress. The effort paid off with several new references. I also remembered seeing a comment in Kim Fisher's book, *On the Screen* (in the M/B/RS reference collection) that the Lilly Library at Indiana University had Welles's private papers for the years 1930 to 1959. An exchange of correspondence with one of the curators brought forth the information that while McGoohan was not mentioned in the small





MCGOOHAN WITH THE LOTUS 7 CAR USED IN FILMING THE OPENING and closing sequences of the series. The house, No. 1 Buckingham Place, was the location of the London home from which he was kidnapped.

amount of correspondence they had for the 1950s, there appeared to be several early versions of the play script in their files.

## FINDING INDUSTRY PEOPLE: PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, AGENTS, AND ACTORS

When I was trying to find film stills, I corresponded

with Rank Films and requested photos from several of the films McGoochan made for them. They were kind enough to lend me about twenty stills from four films with the understanding that they would be returned after the article was finished. I located their address through a film industry directory. Finding the producer of *Trespases* proved a little more difficult because the film company was a small one, but two approaches worked. Since I was unaware of the film's existence until near the end of my research, contacting the production company was a last-minute effort. I wrote the New Zealand Film Commission on the as-



A SERIES OF CLIPS FROM THE *SECRET AGENT* EPISODE "THE PAPER Chase." Patrick McGoochan directed the episode. The scene calls for Joan Greenwood to crash a large vase over McGoochan's head and knock him out.

MCGOOCHAN, AS DIRECTOR, SHOWS JOAN GREENWOOD HOW HE wants her to hold the vase.



SHE PREPARES TO HIT HIM, AS DIRECTED.



A CLOSE-UP OF HER CRASHING THE VASE OVER HIS HEAD IS ACTUALLY







FILMED USING A WIG OVER AN ARTIFICIAL HEAD.



THE FINAL PARTS OF THE SCENE are filmed with McGoonhan falling unconscious to the floor.





RECEIVING  
television's  
1960 Best  
Actor of the  
Year award  
from England's  
Guild of  
Television  
Producers and  
Directors.



PATRICK MCGOOHAN DIRECTING ANOTHER SCENE FROM "THE PAPER Chase," *Secret Agent*.



sumption that the country was small enough that people in the film industry would know each other. I hoped that a staff member at the commission would be kind enough to forward my letter to the right address, and that is exactly what happened. Meanwhile, in M/B/RS they pulled the copyright deposit file for the film and found an address for the film company in a press book. A second letter went to that address. Both letters were forwarded to the producer of the film, Tom Finlayson. He called one evening to ask about my article and agreed to airmail photos (and lend me a copy of the film to view) in order to help me meet a fast-approaching publishing deadline. They arrived several days later along with a letter providing some commentary about the making of the film and working with McGoohan. It was just the touch I needed.

Rather late in the game, I decided to request an interview with Patrick McGoohan. In all honesty, it never occurred to me to do this at the start because that was not the kind of article I was writing. But as the concept expanded, so did the validity of an interview. Unfortunately, as my knowledge of the man and his style grew, it also appeared to me that this would be an unlikely occurrence. The opening quote to this piece ("I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed. . .") by now seemed a perfect description of his attitude, and the irony was not lost on me that this is exactly what librarians and researchers do for a living. Nevertheless, my request went out in the mail. The effort became tangled in a mass of unforeseen brambles and developed into a minimystery of its own. Two agencies, one wrong agent acquired through misinformation, and several letters and phone calls later, I had written my last letter and made my last phone call. I never even got past a secretary.

In fairness, I must say that I did not consider my experience to be that unusual. Actors change agents or agencies (and vice versa) frequently. It is symptomatic of the entire entertainment industry, from scriptwriters to executives. The lesson to be learned from my experience is that it takes patience and perseverance to accomplish anything in an industry that is as erratic as the film business.

The quickest and easiest way to contact an actor for an interview is to call the Screen Actor's Guild. SAG's Agent Referral Office maintains a current computerized file of actors and their agents. You can call either their New York or Los Angeles office, give them the name of the actor you want to contact, and they will give you the name of the agent and the agent's phone number. Keep in mind that this system is set up for professional business contacts and activities, it is not intended to be a conduit for fans. The directories and yearbooks listed in the appendix also provide the same information, but the players involved in this game change so often that you are better off contacting SAG first.

## DONATIONS AND GIFTS

Everything I collected during my research for the article has been donated to two libraries: the bulk of the material went to M/B/RS at the Library of Congress and a smaller amount was given to the Billy Rose Theatre Collection in New York. Copies of photographs or

some videotape of television broadcasts have gone to both libraries. The print information was donated, taking into account the needs of the individual collections, to both locations.

I donated the material to these research libraires to make a concise collection available for the use of other writers and researchers. I have followed this practice over the years with all the material I have collected for my special research projects. The basis of my profession is to collect and preserve information in such a way that it is available to everyone who has an interest in reading or using it. I am not condemning private collections; my work has benefited greatly from such collections more than once. But what I would like to see is copies of these private collections donated to libraries who have an interest and need for materials frequently found behind closed doors. A private collection may be about a particular individual or about a special subject of interest to the collector, but it is often a valuable accumulation of information that could benefit many others if it were shared. However, I also believe the donor has a responsibility to follow some standards when gifts are made. Information that is known to be inaccurate or misleading should never be donated. The best copies possible should be donated; poor quality copies or information that is unidentified should not be donated unless there is an exceptional reason.



This research project was indeed a mystery drama complete with momentary delights, setbacks, occasional frustrations and disappointments, excitement, and insights. The loose ends were not tied up as neatly as they would have been in a novel perhaps, but that is because some of the answers simply did not exist. Perhaps the mystery of individual lives can never be solved by any outsider. But the project did force me to grow professionally in directions I never anticipated when I started and pushed me past limits that surprised me. By the end, I was moving back and forth between libraries in Washington, D.C., and New York, among divisions within those libraries, and had corresponded with people and organizations in several countries. The telephone became nearly as important and indispensable a research tool as the printed page. But despite the incalculable worth of the library collections themselves, it was the people I met who ultimately made the difference. The quality of their work was instrumental in improving the quality of mine.

As with every well-conceived mystery, there is a surprise ending to this story. One evening, as I walked through my front door, after a hard day, with my arms full of books, papers, and a heavy can of 16 mm film, the phone was ringing. I dumped the stuff on the floor and managed to reach it before it stopped. The voice on the other end said, "This is Patrick McGoohan. I'll be in New York later this week on business and perhaps we can arrange to do the interview there." And . . . well, that is another story, but one that has already been written.\*

\*The research and the interview make up the three-part series, "A Conversation with Patrick McGoohan." It appears in *Classic Images* (140-142, February through April 1987). The Library of Congress has a copy.





FRAMING AN  
upcoming shot  
for "Not So Jolly  
Roger," *Secret  
Agent*.





## Research Sources

References useful for compiling quick biographical sketches are: *Performing Arts Biography Master Index* (this listed ten other reference books that had information about Patrick McGoochan); *Who Was Who in the Theatre, 1912-1976* (The word *Was* in the title is deceptive; this four-volume set includes information about anyone who was active on stage during the years cited. This was the best source I had at the start of my work which provided some guidance for his early stage career); *A Who's Who of British Film Actors*; and *Who's Who in America*.

The following publications are useful for compiling lists of films because they include actors' names in their indexes: *Annual Index to Motion Picture Credits*; *Forty Years of Screen Credits, 1929-1969*; *The Illustrated Who's Who of British Films*; and *The Motion Picture Guide* (12 volumes. This reference work was not published at the time I did my research, but I include it here because I think it is the best beginning source now available. It includes an index by actors' names, and since it includes full cast credits, you can find some pretty obscure information that is not available in publications that include only the more prominent names).

The following sources are indexes for articles about actors, special topics about the film industry, or film reviews: *Film Literature Index* (Filmdex, Albany, N.Y., published quarterly, with annual cumulations); *International Index to Film Periodicals* (International Federation of Film Archives, London, published bimonthly on microfiche); *Motion Picture Performers: A Bibliography of Magazine and Periodical Articles, 1900-1969*.

Excellent sources of film reviews are: *Film Review Annual* (1981 to date); *Index to Critical Film Reviews in British and American Film Periodicals* (1930-1972); *Index to Motion Pictures Reviewed by Variety, 1907-1980*; *Variety Film Reviews, 1907-1984*; *Monthly Film Bulletin* (British Film Institute, great for back reviews); and *The New York Times Film Reviews*.

Titles useful for compiling a list of an actor's performances on television: *Actors' Television Credits* (main volume and supplements cover 1950-1981); *TV Guide 25 Year Index* (indexes articles but not the program listings).

The following books provide information about television series and other television productions: *Television 1970-1980*; *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows, 1946-Present*; *The Complete Encyclopedia of Television Programs, 1947-1979*; *Movies Made for Television, 1964-1984*; *Television Drama Series Programming: A Comprehensive Chronicle* (a series covering 1947-1982); and *TV Guide Almanac*.

There are a number of directories available that supply the names and addresses of film industry personnel and companies on a worldwide basis; most of these are updated regularly.

The most useful printed source for finding actors is the AMPAS *Academy Players Directory*. This is a four-volume listing of actors who are available for work. Published as an aid for casting directors and other industry offices involved in hiring actors (from stars to bit players), it includes a photo of each actor along with the name and phone or address of his or her agent.

If you need to contact a director, the Directors Guild of America publishes an annual *Directory of Members*. Another source for contacting directors is *Film Directors*, a complete guide (Lone Eagle Publishing, Beverly Hills).

There are also publications that supply addresses and phone numbers for the many different businesses that make up the film industry. *International Film and TV Yearbook* (King Publications, London) covers the British film industry and other countries in the British Empire. The *Hollywood Reporter* puts out the *Studio Blu-Book Directory* that includes sections of names and addresses for people and businesses in every aspect of the film/television industry in the Los Angeles area. The *International Motion Picture Almanac* and the *International Television Almanac* (both published by Quigley Publishing Co., New York) provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of industry businesses or people and their agents. *Series, Serials, & Packages* and the *TV Feature Film Sourcebook* (Broadcast Information Bureau, Syosset, N.Y.) is an annual list (with supplements) of all of the titles available for rent to television stations and the producers or distributors.

The publications listed above are only a few of the total actually used, but they are representative of the types of reference sources that are available for specialized, but related, areas in the film industry.

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I owe special thanks to several staff members of M/B/RS: Katharine Loughney, one of the reference librarians, who provided invaluable and continuing assistance and probably now knows almost as much about Patrick McGoochan as I do; Paul Spehr, Assistant Chief of the Division, who gave me his time during a period when he had very little of it (and surprised me by disclosing he had been to Portmeirion, the resort in Wales that was the location setting for *The Prisoner*); library technician Joe Balian, who helped set up countless reels of 35mm film and each time told me how brilliant he thought McGoochan was and how much he admired him; and Dorothy L. Swardlove, curator of the Billy Rose Theatre Collection in New York City.

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# BALLETS FOR MARTHA

BY WAYNE D. SHIRLEY

JANUARY 16, 1944, MARTHA GRAHAM, America's foremost modern dancer and choreographer, wrote a letter to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The preceding October a dance concert which Graham had been commissioned to do for Mrs. Coolidge had, through no fault of Graham's, been postponed indefinitely. Graham's letter reviewed the problems of the past two years and made a plea for the continuation of the project. The letter starts out with something like a pledge of loyalty:

All of my years plans centered around the commissions from you. I had planned to come to New York after the Washington performances when they were to have taken place in October. I had planned somehow to present the works here. When the scores did not arrive I was in a quand[ar]ry. I had my company, my pianist, and my own restless eagerness to take into account. I had not appeared here [New York] in two seasons. So I resolved to present the work I had finished at Bennington College last summer. It is called "Deaths and Entrances." Hunter Johnson wrote the music. Then Paul Nordoff wrote a small solo piece for me which I called "Salem Shore." Originally the first New York Performance was scheduled for December 19. Then we could not get the theatre so it was moved up to December 26. That performance was sold out the Wednesday preceding the performance so I announced another and that was sold out a full week in advance. I am not repeating this performance, however, but am waiting to see what our plans can be.

Then she came to the point: the current state of the two scores commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation for Miss Graham to dance—a score on the Medea legend, entitled *Daughter of Colchis*, from leading Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, and an untitled score from Aaron Copland.

This is a continuation of the article "Ballet for Martha: The Commissioning of *Appalachian Spring*" which appeared in the 1987 *Performing Arts Annual*.

THE CREATION OF  
APPALACHIAN SPRING,  
JEUX DE PRINTEMPS,  
AND HÉRODIADÉ





IF MRS. ELIZABETH SPRAGUE COOLIDGE had not commissioned Carlos Chávez to create a score based on the Medea legend for Martha Graham to dance, Samuel Barber might never have composed *Medea*, after Chávez failed to fulfill his commission on time. Here Miss Graham portrays Medea in her ballet *Cave of the Heart*, which she danced to Barber's score.





I have received the first part of both compositions. Aaron Copland's music is lovely, clear, open and essentially Copland. I know I shall enjoy working on it. He is here so we can confer if it is necessary. He also has more finished than I have in my possession. I start work on it tomorrow. This has been flu week for my pianist.

"Clear, open and essentially Copland." The piece, which went on to become Copland's signature piece, has never been described better. Then, in the same paragraph, gloom descends upon the letter:

The Chavez score is another matter. In the first place I am afraid to begin on it until I receive the rest of the music. From what I can get from the piano reduction I have made of what I have now it seems to be music as such and seems to bear no relation to the script we had agreed on. That is not an impossible situation. I can compose a dance counterpoint to the music, because I have done so in other cases. It is difficult to do and requires great concentration. But to do this I have to have the full score so that I can see the line of the music. There is a possibility that Chavez may introduce some device later that may cause me to change my mind about the music so that I must wait. And I am as anxious about the waiting as I am certain you are. I shall only believe it when I have all the music. At this time it has passed the waiting period. For it is a year since Chavez and I talked here in New York and went over the script together.

In fact Graham was being generous: it was in August 1942 that Chávez had been commissioned to write the score for *Daughter of Colchis*, and in November 1942 that he had received a script. In April 1943 he had promised to deliver the completed score by the end of the month. No note of the music, however, had been seen by Martha Graham, Mrs. Coolidge, or the Library of Congress until November 1943—two weeks after the date originally scheduled for the first performance of the work.

And Chávez's score was certainly "music as such." We would be more likely to call it "abstract," perhaps with the adjective "fearsomely" added. Well over a minute of the piece has gone by before the listener has heard anything but the oboe, playing slowly the three principal notes in the key of G. The "blank" style Chávez cultivated in the 1940s—page after page without a single accidental or break in the rhythm—was a style capable of great power and eloquence; but this time it did not seem to be invoking the "secret violence" Graham had asked for in her script.

Considerable work had already been done on the dance which Chávez's score put in jeopardy:

The set for the Chavez work is finished in sketch form. It is very reticent and imaginative and beautiful I feel. It was finished last summer at Bennington. The costumes are planned. My designer does not work from drawings but directly in the fabrics. That is all planned. The Copland sketch for stage is being revised. Mr. Lauterer [Graham's designer] was not satisfied with it so he is working it over in the meantime. My company is standing by as is the designer waiting.

I do not have the company on salary so I have to plan carefully with them as to time. They have activities of their own, dancing their own works. So we plan our schedule of work well in advance.

Gingerly Graham comes to one of the subsidiary reasons for her letter: would it be possible to reject the problematic Chávez work?

My reason for telling you all this is to present the picture to you as well as I can. When had you hoped to present the works in Washington? I had hoped it could be this Spring although I know how wonderful it would have been to have it on your birthday in October.<sup>1</sup> These things have been cradled so long because of no fault of yours. And it seems hard to wait longer. Then, too, there is the point of the Chavez. I wonder if it will ever be finished. In case it does not come is there some alternative? I do feel that you have done all in your power. You have presented the opportunity and have extended the time and you have patiently waited and it has not come. If you wish to give to some other composer the commission I quite agree that you should do so. I am prepared to work with you completely in any such decision. I had understood that the second date for finishing was December 1st. I do not worry about Aaron Copland. His is practically finished. I shall proceed with his work as though we were to produce the works in the Spring in any event.

The letter continues with an unspoken plea for the continuation of the project:

May I also tell you a little of my own dilemma? These last two performances [i.e., those in New York] were successful beyond my greatest dreams. I think, too, they will serve our performances as I feel more assured and feel I can work with a firmer hand and with less inner fear. I am speaking now of the composition of the works you have commissioned. This reception has made it clear that something has taken place in the audience consciousness as well as in my own. We seem closer in some way. I have known that either I must have some help or I could not continue. I have been trying to get some subsidy. I did have some help in producing these performances or else I could not have done them. The result has provided an impetus for a future plan and I must follow it up.

In this I believe I am not wholly selfish although my desires are very strong. I do feel that it has been of a help to the American in art. The reception of public and press has indicated a serious consideration of an American art and an eagerness to accept it and to find in it something strong and possessed of dignity. Any such acceptance is good for all of us. I think the time was right to present the program [i.e., the New York programs] and that helped so much. I feel for the benefit of others, my growing young dancers in my company and their future as well as my own I must build upon this. That means continued performances as soon as possible.

This commission of yours coming into public recognition on this moment will serve to make a seal of





ELIZABETH SPRAGUE COOLIDGE, PATRONESS OF MUSIC, WHO KNEW what she wanted. It was through her commissions and persistence that three ballets were created.







CARLOS CHÁVEZ IN 1940. HIS "CUARTETO DOBLE" WAS NOT completed in time for Mrs. Coolidge's eightieth birthday concert.

approval on it that nothing else could do. I mean by that it will be the first stone toward establishing it as a definite creative activity. It will serve as your commissions have served music and string quartets and the public mind will accept this expression of dance as something legitimate and truly American and as an integral part of the American art scene. . .

Part of my ability to work in this way has been the knowledge that you believed enough in me to award me these works. I feel it made me work with greater assurance than ever before. I felt in some sense "grown-up." That is the only way I can explain it. As far as I am concerned I feel that you gave me a freedom by your gesture of belief in me that I can never quite thank you for because it is a gift of life, the inner strength to go on. I know you have done this for others but it is all the more wonderful for me because I know what it has done for me. For that reason I am sending you some of the clippings.<sup>2</sup> I feel you might like to have them because I do feel you have such a great





share in them and that partly they are yours. . .

If it would help any I could come to Washington to see you. It might make matters easier. I have just written to Mr. Spivacke telling him some of the same things I have said to you.

An ironic note had been added to the increasingly desperate attempts to get the dances ready for a performance on October 30, 1943, when, in early October, Mrs. Coolidge went to a Washington hospital for a gall-bladder operation. Had the dance program in fact been given on Mrs. Coolidge's seventy-ninth birthday, she would not have been able to attend the

CARLOS CHÁVEZ IN 1954. ON JANUARY 23, 1946, MARTHA GRAHAM premiered her dance *Dark Meadow*, to the score Mrs. Coolidge had commissioned from Carlos Chávez as "Daughter of Colchis."



concert. Martha Graham thus ends her letter with wishes for Mrs. Coolidge's health:

I hope you are well again and that the strength has come back. You are so needed and belong to so many more people than to your self. I shall wait to hear







from you. In the meantime I am working. And with great appreciation of you and what you have done for me in my heart.

With deep affection,  
[signed] Martha Graham

Graham had indeed “just written to Mr. Spivacke,” the Chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress and Mrs. Coolidge’s chief collaborator in planning the performances given at the Coolidge Auditorium in the Library. Her letter to Harold Spivacke, dated the same day as her letter to Mrs. Coolidge, goes over much of the same ground, using some of the same words—the Copland score is described as “lovely, clear, open and essentially Copland,” the Chávez is “in strict musical terms without stage awareness”—but Graham has not simply copied from her letter to Spivacke in writing to Mrs. Coolidge. A letter, like a dance, was an individual work of art to Martha Graham. Her letter to Spivacke asks two particular questions: When will the dances take place? What shall we do about the Chávez score?

Mrs. Coolidge and Dr. Spivacke had, in fact, already decided that the date of the performance would have to be put back to October 1944. Spivacke replied to Martha Graham on January 19:

Dear Miss Graham:

I wish that I could be optimistic in answering your letter of January 16. As I wrote Mr. Hawkins recently,<sup>3</sup> a spring performance seems absolutely out of the question. I should not think of setting a date unless I had the complete orchestrated scores in my possession. I must absolutely refuse to wait until the last moment for scores under wartime conditions. It is impossible for either of us to foresee the snags that we may run into in mounting a show like this one. Our musicians may be drafted unexpectedly and the same even applies to your designers and scenery builders. As things stand now, I am hoping to be able to present the ballet around October 30.

In his next paragraph he turned to what had become Topic A of the correspondence:

I was also disappointed in the music that Chávez sent, for many reasons. I can well understand your misgivings from your point of view. Moreover, he rarely makes use of the eight instruments<sup>4</sup> but is really writing two separate quartets, one for string and one for wind. I hasten to add, however, that it is really wrong of us to attempt to judge the work considering what a small portion we have seen.



What was to be done with Chávez? Mrs. Coolidge and Dr. Spivacke conferred, and Mrs. Coolidge wired their decision to Martha Graham one day after Spivacke's letter quoted above:

JANUARY 20, 1944

MISS MARTHA GRAHAM . . .

DR. SPIVACKE AND I DECIDE ON FRESH COMMISSION FOR YOU. HAVE YOU ANOTHER SCRIPT TO REPLACE CHAVEZ IF NECESSARY? PROPOSE HINDEMITH, TOCH OR STRAVINSKY. WHICH IS YOUR PREFERENCE OR HAVE YOU OTHER SUGGESTIONS? SORRY UNABLE TO PREPARE PROPER PERFORMANCE BEFORE OCTOBER. GREATLY REGRET DISAPPOINTMENT. PLEASE REPLY PROMPTLY AS WE MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS.

ELIZABETH S. COOLIDGE

The next day Mrs. Coolidge wrote a letter amplifying on the telegram:

My dear Martha:

I sent you last night a telegram, feeling that you would like to know immediately how Dr. Spivacke and I feel about the matter of your dances at the Library. I am sure you do not need to be told that I am not only deeply disappointed, but rather vexed at the irresponsible manner in which my commissions have been carried out, or, rather, neglected. I have told Dr. Spivacke that I am unwilling to wait any longer for the bare possibility that Mr. Chavez may ultimately fulfill his promise and that I think that there is nothing left, but to offer someone else a commission. My thought was to ask for the same script, but probably Dr. Spivacke is right in thinking that we might, in that case, find ourselves with two scores for the same script; so, he wondered if you might possibly have something else which you could use.

Mrs. Coolidge went on to spell out her current feeling towards the Chávez score:

as both the character and the date of [Chávez's] contribution are so vague and uncertain, I feel absolved from any responsibility, beyond paying him for the work, and making such use of it as we may see fit, when the time comes; but as Dr. Spivacke seemed inclined to feel that it might result in something valuable which we would really want to use, I yielded the point of using the same script.

Mrs. Coolidge ended by affirming her support for the project:

I cannot tell you, my dear Martha, how much I regret all this. I am especially sorry that you have been put to such inconvenience, both artistically and financially, but I hope that the ultimate performance will compensate to you for all the disappointment. I shall await your reply to my telegram with eagerness, and, in the meantime, I sympathize heartily with your point of view with regard to your work and I am thankful to have been of some encouragement or assistance in so important, an artistic development in American art.

Affectionately yours,  
[Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge]<sup>5</sup>



Graham wired back immediately, on the 23 of January:

WAS OUT OF TOWN WHEN YOUR TELEGRAM ARRIVED [ ] AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING DECISION [ ] THINK CHOICE EXCELLENT [ ] MY PREFERENCE IS HINDEMITH [ ] I DO NOT HAVE SCRIPT ON ANOTHER THEME READY BUT CAN WORK ON IT [ ] IN EVENT THESE COMPOSERS ARE NOT INTERESTED I MIGHT





SUGGEST SOMEONE ELSE [/] LETTER FOL-  
LOWING [/] THANK YOU [/] REGARDS  
MARTHA GRAHAM

On the same day she sent a letter, giving her reac-  
tions in detail:

January 23, 1944

Dear Mrs. Coolidge:

As I wired I was away when your telegram came. It  
is so very good of you to endeavor to find a way out of

THE FULL CAST OF *APPALACHIAN SPRING*. THE SINISTER FIGURE WITH HIS  
back to the camera is Merce Cunningham.







MARTHA GRAHAM AND ERICK HAWKINS, ABOUT TO EXCHANGE VOWS,  
in *Appalachian Spring*.





this difficulty. The names you suggest, Hindemith, Toch, Stravinsky are wonderful ones. My preference is Hindemith but I am certain any of them would do a beautiful work. I do not have another script. I think that is what you meant, a script on another subject from the one given Chavez. I was not quite sure whether you meant another copy of that script or another script. I would have to begin work at once on one if it is the new one. Naturally I want to do what will be best.

I am working on the Copland music now and it is very beautiful and stimulating. I am also telephoning Aaron often saying I must have the rest soon. I will not relax on that. I shall continue to work on it even though the performances are postponed until fall. I do agree with you and Dr. Spivacke that it is necessary and wise to plan upon the fall dates. And I am glad that such is the case in view of the new commission pending.

In case these men do not want to write for me then perhaps we could select some one else. I do know that Stravinsky is interested only in the Ballet. I think he has never seen any performance of modern dance, either mine or any one else in that field . . . Of course his music is magical for dance and theatre performance. And I am greatly excited by it. Toch I know less of although I know some of his shorter pieces and one orchestral work, a piano concerto . . . which was wonderful and rich in stage implication. I do not mean theatrical music but music that has the fabric of stage in it.

I do not really know who to suggest. I like Samuel Barber but he is in the army and now is at work on a commission from the army, I believe. For a certain effectiveness there is Paul Bowles. Some of his things are very good. I do not think them great at all but they have a skill and a vitality. Someday I should think Benjamin Britten might write for dance in a fine way. I have only heard the string quartet you commissioned on the performance here and I liked it very much.

Having considered possible composers for a new commission, Graham finally allowed herself the luxury of a frank comment on Chávez's score:

I am very sorry about Chavez. He must be in a period when it is not possible for him to work. I felt the music he sent us was empty. I had been so excited by the *Antigone* he wrote<sup>6</sup> and we spoke of it when he was here last January. He felt on reading the script that I had had his *Antigone* in my mind and I had had. So it must be a period of dearth for him.

Graham ends her letter with further comments upon the writing of a new script. Then she adds a post-script in her rounded handwriting:

Monday [January 24]

I talked with Aaron today about the change of plans. Of the three [suggested composers to commission] he favors Stravinsky—and he made me feel that he might prove very exciting—theatrically—and I got excited over that prospect. But you have probably started with Hindemith. In that case I shall abide by my first decision—

Martha

In all probability Hindemith had already been

called by the time Mrs. Coolidge received Martha Graham's letter.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is interesting to see that this commission, which was to result in one of Hindemith's most powerful works, quivered at the beginning between him and Stravinsky. (The work Stravinsky ended up writing in the spring of 1944 was *Scènes de Ballet*, commissioned from him a few weeks later by Billy Rose at exactly ten times the figure that he would have been offered by the Library of Congress.)

The new commission started out shakily enough. Martha Graham had warned Mrs. Coolidge in her letter quoted above that it would take her a while to create a new script for Hindemith:

Until I hear from you I shall endeavor to work on another script. It has always taken a little time as it is a peculiar form of concentration. But I know how valuable the time is now . . . I have one idea that may make a script. I have started work on it but it is a long way from finished.

By mid-February Hindemith had not yet received the script. He complains, in his first letter concerning the commission in the Music Division's files:

Feb 11, 1944

Dear Mr. Spivacke:

Miss Graham called me up two weeks ago and said she would send the script for the planned ballet immediately. I have not heard from her since, so that I assume she abandoned the idea entirely. If this assumption is wrong and the sending of the plot is merely delayed, I would like to confirm your kind letter and its statements.

Spivacke replied on February 22:

Thank you very much for your letter of February 11. Immediately upon its receipt, I phoned Miss Graham and urged her to get in touch with you at once. She promised to do so and I presume that you have heard from her by now. She told me that she was hard at work on the script for the ballet but if you have not heard from her, please let me know at once. Do not think for a moment that either of us has abandoned the idea! We look forward to the creation of this new ballet with the greatest eagerness.

When Hindemith finally did see Graham's script, he was not pleased. Graham told Spivacke the result in a letter dated March 19, 1944:

You probably have heard from Mr. Hindemith by this time.<sup>8</sup> I sent him the script. I had in return a very nice letter which I shall have copied and send to you.<sup>9</sup> From what he says he prefers not to do this kind of music at this time. I do not know whether the idea of a script worried him or not. He did say that if I wanted to do something with more abstraction for abstraction's sake perhaps we could collaborate sometime in the future. . . . This is my plan. I shall ask him to see me. He has already promised to do that if I am in the vicinity of New Haven. Perhaps he will have some suggestion to make. Frankly, I do not care about a script or following any such device. I only did it that way because it seemed easier and because Aaron















seemed to like it that way . . . But if Mr. Hindemith has a plan I shall try to follow that. There is only one thing and that is that I feel my best work does not follow the symphonic form. At least not in a musical sense.

The standard symphonic forms had come to interest Hindemith more and more. He had started out the 1940s with a Symphony in E-flat in the regulation four movements, and his most recent dance work had been a Theme with Four Variations. Graham, who unlike many modern choreographers had no enthusiasm for Dancing the Classics, may have feared being trapped in the kind of exposition-development-recapitulation piece which explores the ramifications of key and motive while she ached to explore the cave of the heart.

Later in her letter Graham explains why she thought the script she sent would please Hindemith:

I blame myself because I did not foresee this possibility and make the script along his lines in the first place. But I did not know he was in this period of composition. I probably could have found out but I did not think of it. I remembered his St. Francis [*Nobilissima Visione*, Hindemith's ballet of 1938] and thought he might follow such a theatrical line.

Spivacke replied on March 24:

Dear Miss Graham:

I was shocked when I read your letter of March 19 with the news that Hindemith does not seem to wish to do the music for you. . . . Upon receiving your letter I was tempted to phone him but decided to wait until you had a chance to speak to him. Please let me know as soon as you have further word. I have not mentioned this matter to Mrs. Coolidge as I do not want to worry her.

It was on March 29 that Graham and Hindemith finally met. It was probably at that meeting that Hindemith suggested an alternative to the "symphonic" score that made Graham uneasy: a score that would explore word by word every nuance of Stéphane Mallarmé's enigmatic poem *Hérodiade*. The details of this remarkable score and the varying means that have been used to bring its hidden messages to light will be the subjects of an article in a future Library of Congress *Performing Arts Annual*. But here we can note in brief that Hindemith proposed to "set" the poem as though to be sung, then score the setting for (voiceless) chamber orchestra. Thus, the Mallarmé poem would be held in solution within the piece, which nonetheless would be "pure music"—like Browning's reprinted ring. This would be a work which would indeed give Graham a chance to explain the human heart; and, as well, a work whose cosmopolitanism would serve to counterbalance the Americanism of Copland's ballet.

The most awkward part of commissioning Hindemith to write a dance to replace Chávez's truant "cuarteto doble" was the necessity of informing Chávez that

his piece would no longer be part of the program on October 30. Harold Spivacke's letter to Chávez informing him of that decision, written March 7, is not now in the Music Division's files. Chávez's answer, however, is:

March 27 1944

Dear Dr. Spivacke:

Last thursday I received your letter dated March 7th. I am a bit surprised at the contents and at the tone of it.

It seems to me, if the Music Division of the Library of Congress gives out a commission, it is on the presumption that a good piece of music will result.

Now. If the Division cannot wait to get a good piece of music, or, else, if the Division would be happy to have any music on condition that it is delivered promptly, then I shall have to disagree with the Division of Music.

To me, time is a secondary consideration. "Time is money," but, *time is not music*. My first consideration is music, that is to say, quality in music.

What do we care if a *good* piece of music carries a date 1843 or 1844?

If, at any time, you like my music and, on that ground, you think you can use it, I shall be very happy. If not, I shall be very sorry, considering I have disappointed the Music Division and the great artist Miss Graham is.

There is a paragraph in your letter which reads: "At any rate we have been forced to change our plans and suspend for the time being our commission for this music, unless you would prefer to have it cancelled. If you still feel that you would like to write the music, please send it to us and we shall be glad to accept and ultimately pay for the commission when our budget permits."

I am not going to judge in any sense the decisions you take in matters of your province. But I know what I myself can accept and what I cannot. I can only consider acceptable you to tell me quite straightforwardly whether the commission is already off, or it is still on.

If it is off, it goes without saying I shall have no objection whatever to do[sic], and, at any rate, I am and shall continue to be happy, as the music is practically finished, and I have enjoyed myself writing it.

In case it is still on, upon receipt of your confirmation I will send to you the following numbers, which are already finished and clean-copied right here on my table: Interludio, Encantamiento y Sarabanda; Pean; Preludio. These numbers delivered, the only part still due would be the second Allegro, which is already in shape, [and] will take only [a] few weeks to be finished. In this case, it is natural you shall have to pay for the commission the moment you receive the last bar of the manuscript.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
Carlos Chávez

This was the most extended and elegant bit of composition that anyone had received from Chávez since the granting of the commission. This lecture de haut en bas produced an angry draft of a reply from Spivacke. Mrs. Coolidge, however, counseled restraint—the draft is annotated "amended at request of Mrs. C."—and the final answer to Chávez was in the best tradition of bureaucratic blandness:



April 24, 1944

Dear Mr. Chávez:

I was really surprised to read the contents of your letter of March 27. I am sure that you will agree that you gave us every indication of having abandoned the project.

In view of all that has occurred, I should think that you would have understood my remark regarding payment for the commission. I had no reason to believe that you had really completed the work and that we could expect it in the immediate future. It goes without saying that if you will deliver it to us now, we shall pay you immediately.

Very sincerely yours,  
[Harold Spivacke]

Meantime, work was going forward full-time on Copland's piece. In the same letter in which Graham gave Spivacke the bad news of Hindemith's rejection of her script, she reported:

Aaron came down<sup>10</sup> and played some more of the music yesterday. It is almost finished. I think there [are] above five minutes more, perhaps six. It is lovely. I heard the end and it is so evocative and with a great beauty. Some of the other parts are terrifically exciting. So that is good news.

It was at about this time that Martha Graham, Mrs. Coolidge, and Harold Spivacke came to the decision to commission a third work—presumably to bring the program up to the normal length of a concert program, or perhaps just as insurance in case one of the other commissions fell through as Chávez's had. The composer to be commissioned was Darius Milhaud, a leading French composer then living in California. Milhaud's international reputation made him a good choice to complement Copland and Hindemith. Perhaps even more important, his reputation as a swift worker (a reputation he fully justified in this commission) made him a safe commissionnee at this late moment in the proceedings.

The considerations that went into Copland's and Hindemith's commissions (and Chávez's) are well documented in the Music Division's correspondence collections. The reasons for deciding on a third commission and for deciding what composer was to be chosen are, however, completely undocumented. Doubtless conversations in person or by telephone led to the decision. So whether it was Mrs. Coolidge, Mr. Spivacke, or Martha Graham who felt that a third work was necessary to the program is impossible to tell for sure. And who decided that Milhaud was the best composer to commission is also impossible to tell (though it is probable it was not Martha Graham, who for a while had trouble spelling his name).

Though there is little correspondence with Milhaud concerning the commissioning of his piece—it turned out to be the suite *Jeux de Printemps*, which Graham's company danced under the title *Imagined Wing*—other correspondence of the years 1941 to 1944 between Milhaud and the Music Division suggests what may have been the real motivation behind commissioning him to write a third work for Martha Graham. In these letters Milhaud offers to sell to the Music Division his collection of manuscripts of his mentor, the





MARTHA GRAHAM AND MAY  
O'Donnell performing *Mirror  
Before Me* in the Coolidge  
Auditorium to Paul Hindemith's  
*Hérodiade* score.











MARTHA GRAHAM IN *MIRROR BEFORE ME*. THE SET IS BY Isamu Noguchi.

MARTHA GRAHAM AND MAY O'DONNELL IN *MIRROR BEFORE ME*.

composer Erik Satie. Milhaud was clearly in need of money. The commission may have been a way of getting some money to a great musician who had not found a way of making a living in the strange world of California.

Whatever the motivation may have been, the letter commissioning Milhaud went out on April 25.

This work should not be over fifteen or at most twenty minutes long. It might even be slightly shorter if you prefer. The accompaniment for the dance should be for a small chamber music ensemble not to exceed, let us say, a double quartet. It need not be all strings



since we expect to have some wind players available. Since Miss Graham will have to prepare the dances during the summer, it will be necessary for us to have the work not later than July 1.

The letter goes on to spell out a difference between this commission and the other commissions whose fates we have watched unfolding:

Although Martha Graham usually works with a script which she prepares, she has agreed in this case because of lack of time to compose the dances to the music.

The commission was accepted with pleasure:

April 28

Dear Mr. Spivacke:

Thank you for your letter. I accept with the greatest pleasure the commission for a dance work for Martha Graham. I will do my best to send you a piano score before July 1. I accept all the terms of your letter of April 25.

I proposed Mrs. Coolidge to write it for *flute clarinet bassoon trumpet percussion violin viola cello Basses* and she wired me her approval.<sup>11</sup>

Spivacke in turn accepted Milhaud's proposed scoring (which he, in fact, used, save that there is no percussion in the final version of *Jeux de Printemps*) and the Martha Graham dance concert for Mrs. Coolidge's eightieth birthday found itself with a full evening of three dances.

*Jeux de Printemps* has always been the orphan of the Coolidge-Graham program. Copland's ballet is among the best-known of American works; *Hérodiade* is known and respected by those who are interested in twentieth-century chamber music; but *Jeux de Printemps* is unknown even to most admirers of Milhaud's music.

The work was an orphan from the beginning: Graham, who customarily appeared in every work she choreographed, did not dance in it. There is not even a photograph of the work—set or dancers—among the Music Division's photographs. (We know there was a set; there is an item for it in the budget.)

But the real cause of its orphan state lies in the music. Milhaud was a notoriously prolific composer, and *Jeux de Printemps*, while excellent Milhaud, is not the exceptional work among his oeuvre which the Copland and Hindemith are among their composers' works. Even the tempo markings of its movements (six bite-size movements, each a convenient length for a single side of a 78 r.p.m. record) suggest a typical Milhaud suite: *Alerte. gai. Tranquille* (6/8, a *Sicilienne*). *Robuste. Nonchalant. Joyeux*.

There is no reason that, given a different cast of the dice, *Jeux de Printemps* might not be the 1940s Milhaud suite that is regularly played, rather than the *Suite Provençale*, the *Globetrotter Suite*, or *The Pleasures of Life*. But there is no particular reason to prefer it to these others. Such is the fate of the works of a prolific composer whose music has a strong general consistency. (Much of Hindemith's music of the 1940s, though not *Hérodiade*, has suffered the same







MARTHA GRAHAM IN *MIRROR BEFORE ME*. HERE she wears a more elaborate costume than could be prepared in time for the premiere.







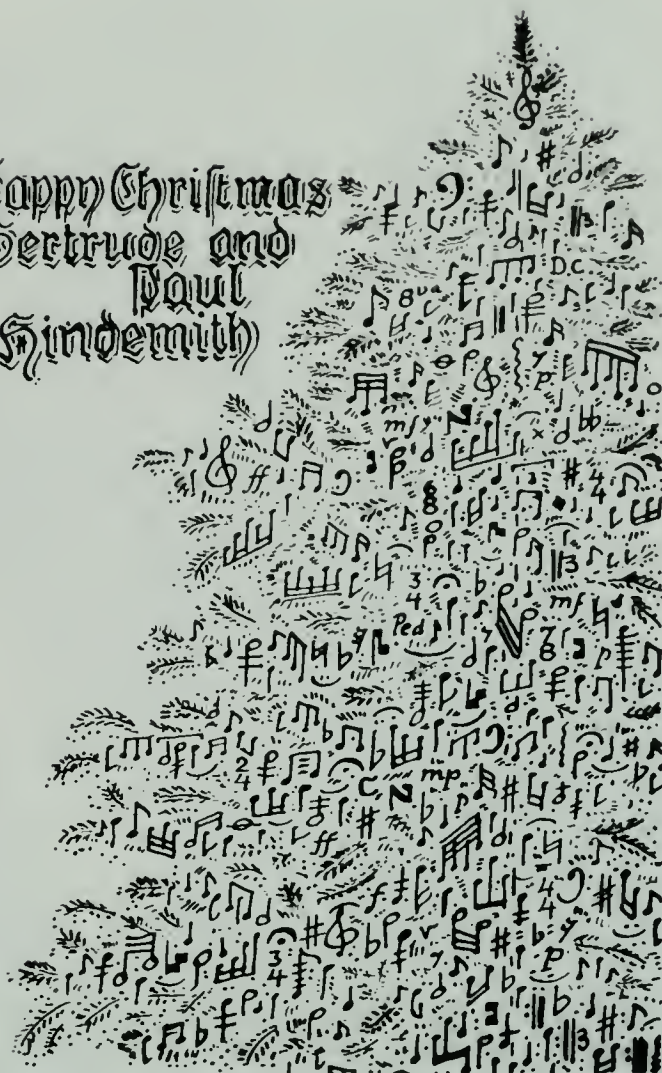
PAUL HINDEMITH IN HIS LATER YEARS.







Happy Christmas  
Gertrude and  
Paul  
Hindemith



Many thanks for your  
kind letter. I am glad  
the ballet served its purpose!  
Best wishes for 1945!

Yours  
Paul Hindemith

GERTRUDE AND PAUL HINDEMITH'S CHRISTMAS CARD TO HAROLD  
Spivacke in 1944 in which Hindemith is "glad the ballet  
served its purpose."







la musique,  
à Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague  
Coolidge.

avec l'expression de sa  
fidèle et respectueuse  
dévotion.

---

M. L. Chau  
Aix 1933



DARIUS MILHAUD INSCRIBED THIS PHOTOGRAPH FOR MRS. ELIZABETH Sprague Coolidge in 1933. In 1944 he composed *Jeux de Printemps* for Mrs. Coolidge's eightieth birthday concert in the Coolidge Auditorium. Martha Graham's ballet for this score was entitled *Imagined Wing*.

fate.) Looking at *Jeux de Printemps* afresh, we find a pleasant piece which would enliven a concert program and which would work very well as the score for a not-too-serious dance. But we do not find, as we do with Copland's and Hindemith's pieces for Graham, a major work which affects our judgment of the composer—and perhaps our way of looking at the world.

In late May, with the inevitability of the other shoe dropping, came the now no-longer-needed score from Chávez. It came in negative photostat, in piano reduction rather than full score, and still without the final *Allegro* (which did not arrive until August). Reaction was fairly uniform:

[Spivacke to Coolidge, June 14, 1944]:

Believe it or not the enclosed photostat is a positive of a negative sent us by Chavez representing the rest of his work written for Martha Graham.<sup>12</sup> I had a letter from him telling me that the original manuscript fully orchestrated will arrive in a few days. I wrote him of course that we could not pay him until we did receive the original manuscript, but said nothing about performance. The work seems to be full length but consists entirely of pretty slow music. I really believe that it would be difficult to dance even if we intended to perform it but I certainly hope that we shall not be faced with that possibility . . .

[Coolidge to Spivacke, June 17]:

Your letter, forwarding Chavez's manuscript and the quotation from his note, came safely. I do not feel that I have any advice on the subject except to agree with you that it is wise to ignore all his whims and moods, and simply respond to the actual contract and agreement which we have with him . . . I believe that further disputes or arguments only increase the tension and will lead nowhere.

[Spivacke to Graham, June 14]:

Dear Miss Graham:

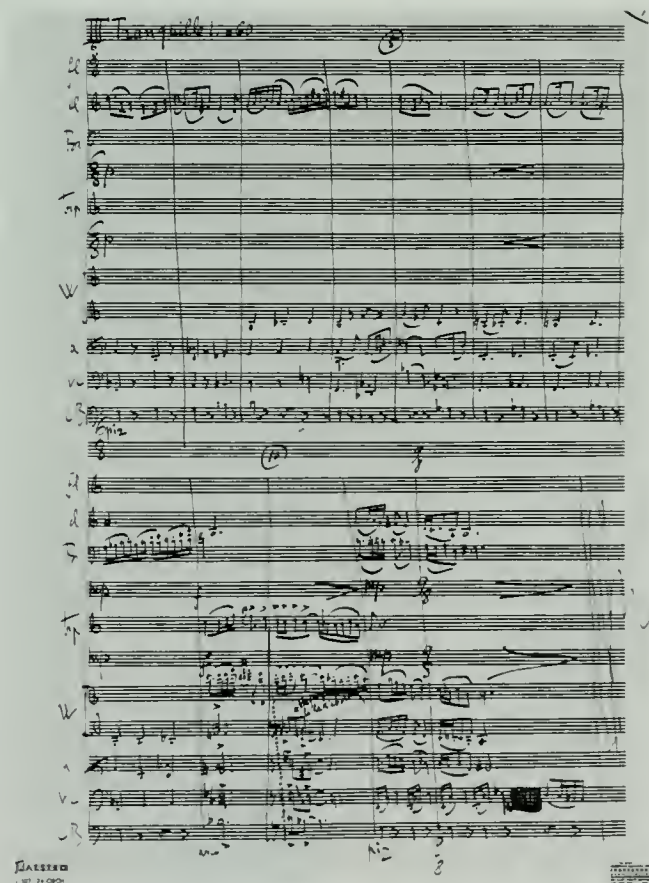
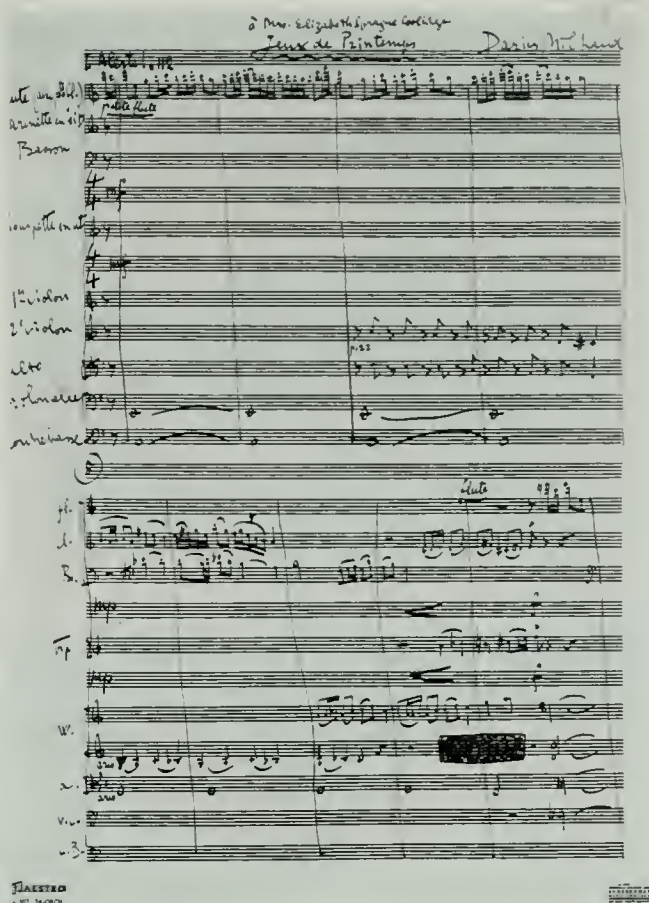
Enclosed is a positive reproduction of a negative photostat recently sent me by Carlos Chavez. It represents the final numbers of the ballet with the exception of one *Allegro* which he says he has finished and will send me soon.

[Graham to Spivacke, June 19]:

I was quite overwhelmed to receive the Chavez music . . . It is a little difficult to make mention of it, I mean by that, to know how it will sound<sup>13</sup> not having the scoring, but perhaps that will come in due time. It may be quite nice, but I think it would depend entirely on the instrumentation.

Of course something that would sound "quite nice" had not been what Graham had hoped to get as a score for her proposed dance about Medea.

Graham's letter to Spivacke of June 19 was, in fact, one of a series of letters she wrote on the same date, winding up business in New York before going to Bennington for the summer. With the letter to Spivacke



DARIUS MILHAUD'S FULL SCORE MANUSCRIPT FOR *JEUX DE Printemps*—a tranquil passage from the third movement. Milhaud reorchestrated the ballet music for full orchestra in 1955.



she enclosed carbons of letters to Aaron Copland and Paul Hindemith. The letter to Copland breathes the happiness of a creator confident of the material she has to work with:

June 19, 1944

Dear Aaron:

The music has arrived and I am so happy to have it. It came just as I was going out of town over the weekend and I have not had a chance to hear it, but will do so this afternoon and then I will write you another letter.<sup>14</sup> Thank you for having the music here at the end of the week as you said you would have . . .

I am writing at once to Spivacke and telling him that I am going full steam ahead with the music, and I shall write to you about the last part tomorrow.

Thank you so much for a beautiful work, because I am sure the last of it is as beautiful as the first. It is a

dream that I have had for so long, and now I can hardly realize that it is about to come true.

With best wishes,  
[Martha Graham]

The carbon to Hindemith reflects the fact that Graham was still coming to terms with the idea of choreographing Mallarmé's elusive poem:

Dear Mr. Hindemith:

I know you must think I have completely dropped out of the world, but I have not written to you about the instrumentation as I promised, because it was still not settled to my satisfaction. I have had word about the instruments Aaron Copland planned to use . . . double quartet of strings, double bass, piano, clarinet,

DARIUS MILHAUD IN HIS LATER YEARS. THIS photograph is inscribed to Minna Lederman. Courtesy of the Modern Music Archive.





bassoon and flute making thirteen players in all. Frankly, this is too many. I know it can be arranged for Washington, and probably for New York when under the Coolidge help, but when it comes to the independence of my own performances, and the problem of touring, I know I cannot use so many . . .

I have thought so much about your music and I do know how deeply moving and gratifying it is. I am beginning to see my way with "Herodiade" [that is, the poem] more clearly. I find the poem fuller and richer everytime I come to it. Hearing it in French, as Mrs. Hindemith read it to me, helped a great deal in understanding the sonority that is in the poem in the original which the English lacks. I only hope I can do something better than I have ever done before in my part in the composing of the dance and the performing of it. I shall await some word from you about the music with great eagerness . . .

Will you let me know approximately when I can

expect the piano part. I hope you are quite well again. I enjoyed, more than I can tell you, the afternoon I spent with you and Mrs. Hindemith. I am frank to admit I was quite overwhelmed at first by the strength of both of you, but I loved it and I hope I was not too difficult for you. I hope you have enjoyed doing the piece and that it will bring you satisfaction when it is performed.

I have slight qualms about it because you have never seen me dance. You do understand, I am sure, that I have to have a slight leeway in my part, that is in my composing of the dance. I do not mean musical change of course, but I mean that I must detach myself from the poem and move freely in the music and the idea . . .

With best wishes.

Sincerely,  
[Martha Graham]

A 1940 SELF-CARICATURE OF DARIUS MILHAUD.  
*Courtesy of the Modern Music Archive.*



M. Milhaud  
New York  
1940



Breathily, from the distance Meyer's ~~Allegretto~~ *Andante* *Andante*

2 Fl. 3

icc 4

(3 Fl.)

2 Eb

C. 9.

Cl. (m.)

2 Cl.

(sib.)

Cl. t.

2 Fag.

Contrabass.

4 Corni

3 Trombe

(m.) 3

Tromboni

3 + Tuba

Timp

Sdgno

B.J.

Arpa

Piano

(open)

I

II

sm

icc

Ch

G. RICORDI & C.

Copied at 1:49, 1955 by S. M. M.



# V. Medea

51

$\text{♩} = 58$  *sombre, with dignity*

*quasi recitativo*

Handwritten musical score for Section V. Medea. The score is written for a solo voice (H.) and piano (p.). The tempo is marked  $\text{♩} = 58$  and the mood is *sombre, with dignity*. The style is *quasi recitativo*. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *cresc.*, and *p. sostenuto, non arpeggiato*. The notation features a 3/4 time signature and various musical symbols including notes, rests, and slurs.

Continuation of the handwritten musical score for Section V. Medea. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *poco f*, and *f*. The notation continues with various musical symbols and a 3/4 time signature.

## THE MEDEA SCRIPT WHICH MARTHA GRAHAM SENT

Chávez did not fit with the music he composed. However, in 1947 she was able to perform the Medea role in her ballet, *Cave of the Heart*, to Samuel Barber's *Medea*, which is still often recorded and performed. Here we have Barber's manuscript of "Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance" and section "V. Medea" from his ballet suite *Medea*.



The letter to Spivacke which enclosed these two carbons reflects with somewhat more confidence, on her experience with Hindemith:

I think I told you I had heard half of the Hindemith music on the piano in sketch form. It is really very beautiful and I think will be very moving in performance if I can do my part even moderately well. I have enjoyed the interviews with Mr. Hindemith and have gained a great deal from the contact with him I feel. It was not always easy, and at times also a little overpowering, but it was very stimulating. To dance a work of his and of Aaron is a dream I have had for such a long time that I can hardly believe it is about to come to pass.

The letter ends by contrasting the summer of 1944 with that of 1943:

[It] really seems wonderful to be going to Bennington with music. As you remember, last summer was a summer of rest and worry, waiting upon Mr. Chavez. If there is anything else I should know about all this, will you write me either here or at Bennington.

The summer—and autumn and winter—of “rest and worry” were over. The summer of work and creation was about to begin.

Summers of “rest and worry” are likely to produce more in the way of correspondence than summers in which creative work is being done. Thus the summer of 1944, when *Appalachian Spring* and *Hérodiade* were actually being choreographed, is far less thoroughly documented by correspondence than the earlier period when plans were taking shape. The arrivals of the completed scores are documented in carbons of Spivacke to Graham (Milhaud, July 5; Hindemith, July 27; Copland, August 4),<sup>15</sup> but Graham’s own letters, so copious during earlier stages of the project, stop now that she is engaged in creative work. It is in a secretarial note that she tells Spivacke of the completion of the piano version of Hindemith’s score (adding a paragraph about the inevitable Chávez):

June 24, 1944

Dear Dr. Spivacke:

Miss Graham asked me to write you and tell you that she has seen the Hindemith score and thinks that it is extremely beautiful . . . She will have the piano part between the ninth and the eleventh.

As yet, Miss Graham has not reached a decision about the Chavez music, but she is thinking about it and will write you again later.

Yours very truly,  
[Helene Lipska]  
Secretary

By August Graham had become almost reclusive:

[telegram]:

AUGUST 7, 1944

MISS MARTHA GRAHAM  
BENNINGTON COLLEGE  
BENNINGTON, VERMONT

WILL YOU PLEASE ANSWER MY LETTER  
OF JULY 5 AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVE-  
NIENCE [?] AM ANXIOUS TO COMPLETE AR-

## RANGEMENTS FOR FESTIVAL HAROLD SPIVACKE

Spivacke’s letter of July 5 had concerned the scoring of Milhaud’s piece. Throughout the correspondence had run a thread of concern as to exactly what instruments were to be used by each composer—the tug of war being between the composer’s ideal sound and the exigencies of a touring group such as Graham’s, for which even a single extra instrument might make the difference between a work which could be taken on tour and one that could be performed only with special subvention. (This aspect of the correspondence has been underplayed in this article because it seems, in fact, to have made fairly little difference in the final scoring of the pieces.) In the end Spivacke’s telegram was answered not by Graham but by Erick Hawkins:

Monday August (12th?) 1944<sup>16</sup>

Martha mentioned to me Saturday that you had wired her to ask her to answer your letter of some time back. If ever you do not get a prompt answer from her for any reason, some times I can help matters, so write me about it and I shall always try to expedite and clarify everything I can.

In fact, from this point on in the correspondence Hawkins takes over for Graham, as the correspondence becomes more and more concerned with financial and logistical matters, and less and less with artistic decisions. Hawkins explains his attitude towards such matters in a letter of August 21:

While I hate business, and am never so happy as when I stick right to dancing and choreographing as I have this summer, still I have brains enough to see the problem.

Graham relied on Hawkins’s brains, and his sense of responsibility, to attend to the budgets and other business details of the Coolidge performances.

It was, in fact, in his letter of August 21 that Hawkins comments on the problems of scoring that had caused Spivacke’s letter of July 5 and its follow-up telegram. Perhaps Hawkins’s comment can stand for the entire discussion of this problem, with its combination of unwillingness to force a composer to renounce an instrumental color he needs and demand that the actualities of touring budgets be recognized. Hawkins is discussing the budget for orchestra rehearsals:

I know that your orchestra bill will be large, and truth to tell, I am terribly disappointed that scores seemed to get out of hand and go beyond eight or nine men . . .

Since I have mentioned it now, I might as well go on to say for the record, even tho it is too late now, that I wish I had interfered to the extent of pointing out to everyone concerned, that until some other financial situation is revealed the size of the scores (I mean number of instruments) is going to make it almost impossible to tour the country with these works. And that I think is a great shame. Our budget for touring this year until we get some subsidy will not allow for more than the eight men which all of our scores



were done for up to now . . .

For example, the second violin Hindemith put in can practically wreck in a way a touring budget when it is a question of not having a subsidy as the Russian ballet invaders wrangle out of Americans . . . And the people who suffer as much as the American dancers are the American public. They cry to see Martha all over the country . . . and not being able to take even a little risk, we don't go to all the places that would gradually support us could we get there.

But the scores were written and ready for rehearsal. Throughout July, August, and September letters went back and forth planning the logistics of a series of two performances in the Coolidge Auditorium followed by a week of performances in New York: budgets, schedules, guest lists for the Coolidge Festival performances. Most of this correspondence is noteworthy primarily to those who are interested in the financial details of producing dance in the 1940s. One paragraph in Erick Hawkins's letter of October 3 to Harold Spivacke, however, captures the exciting moment when Aaron Copland's "Ballet for Martha"—the name he gave his work-in-progress—is given its proper name:

For the press release you are sending out please use "Appalachian Spring" for the Copland ballet. The titles for the other pieces are absolutely wrong [Spivacke was using the composers' titles rather than the titles Graham was to give the dances] and I think it would be much wiser not to put in any title unless Martha sends you something by wire within a day or two when you have to have the mimeograph release ready.

"Appalachian Spring": the phrase is now part of the American language. Martha Graham had found it in Hart Crane's poem "The Dance":

I took the portage climb, then chose  
A further valley-shed; I could not stop.  
Feet nozzled wat'ry webs of upper flows;  
One white veil gusted from the very top.

O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge;  
Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward bends  
And northward reaches in that violet wedge  
Of Adirondacks! . . .

Most of us, who think of the phrase "Appalachian Spring" in terms of the dance, are disconcerted when reading the poem for the first time to find that the "spring" is the source of the "white veil" of water that "gusts" from the top of the Appalachian ledge. We tend to think of the "Spring" of the title as a season, not a wellspring. Indeed, so radiant is Copland's score with the sound of new life that it is impossible not to think of the "Spring" in the title of the piece as the season. Reading her note for the first performance, we realize that Martha Graham herself finally thought of "Spring" as the time of year.

We do not know when the other two works received their dance titles, but when the audience gathered at the Coolidge Auditorium on October 30 they found

the Hindemith listed as *Mirror Before Me* and the Milhaud as *Imagined Wing*. A note explained the plot—or nonplot—of *Imagined Wing*: it was "A fantasy of theatre with several characters in various imagined places." *Mirror Before Me* had a considerably more detailed note:

The scene is an antechamber where a woman waits with her attendant. She does not know for what she waits; she does not know what she may be required to do or to endure, and the time of waiting becomes a time of preparation. A mirror provokes an anguish of scrutiny; images of the past, fragments of dreams float to its cold surface, add to the woman's agony of consciousness. With self-knowledge comes acceptance of her mysterious destiny; this is the moment when waiting ends.

Solemnly the attendant prepares her. As she advances to meet the unknown, the curtain falls.

And, finally, *Appalachian Spring*, which the program said was "Dedicated to Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge":

Part and parcel of our lives is that moment of Pennsylvania spring when there was "a garden eastward in Eden."

Spring was celebrated by a man and a woman building a house with joy and love and prayer; by a revivalist and his followers in their shouts of exaltation; by a pioneering woman with her dreams of the Promised Land.

With the evening of October 30 this story ends. The later history of the works which Mrs. Coolidge commissioned for Martha Graham, though important in the story of twentieth-century music, is for us epilogue.

One bit of epilogue is worth special notice. On Wednesday, January 23, 1946, Martha Graham appeared in New York in the premiere of her dance *Dark Meadow*, to the score Mrs. Coolidge had commissioned from Carlos Chávez and for which Coolidge, Graham, and Spivacke had waited so anxiously for so many months. In *Dark Meadow* the sole character, "A Searcher," searches for the Meaning of Life—or perhaps, as Mrs. Coolidge and Mr. Spivacke may well have thought, for a suitable choreography for Chávez's oh-so-abstract score. There is no sign that Mrs. Coolidge attended the performance; nor has Chávez's score ever been performed in the Coolidge Auditorium.

The three pieces which received their premieres on October 30, 1944, went on to separate fates. Milhaud's *Jeux de Printemps* faded away, becoming a mere listing in the composer's catalog of works. After the repeat performance of Graham's whole program on October 31, 1944, it has never again been performed in the hall that heard its first performance.

Hindemith's *Hérodiade* has established itself among connoisseurs of twentieth-century music as an important work, respected even by those who find Hindemith's other work of the 1940s to be overly concerned with the need for formal clarity. Unlike *Jeux de Prin-*







*temps*, *Hérodiade* remained in Graham's repertory—with a new and splashier costume replacing Isamu Noguchi's overly feminine dress.

If *Hérodiade* became a masterpiece acknowledged by connoisseurs, *Appalachian Spring* became one of the great musical symbols of America. In 1945 it won the Pulitzer Prize as best musical work, the third piece to do so.<sup>17</sup> It is one of the few American concert works whose name the average literate American immediately recognizes. Only the three most popular Gershwin concert works have greater name recognition; probably next after *Appalachian Spring* is another Copland piece, the *Fanfare for the Common Man*. But more than these, the music itself has become "part and parcel of our lives," as Graham's note to the first performance said of the experience it evokes. "Simple Gifts," the Shaker song which Copland used for the radiant climax of the ballet, is now a well-known tune; and the general sound of the piece is drawn on again and again by composers for the media. Most often it is drawn on to express one of two feelings: Heartland America and Nobility. There are worse things for music to connote.

On May 12, 1945, Harold Spivacke wrote Aaron Copland, congratulating him on winning the Pulitzer Prize. Copland's reply can serve as a coda to the correspondence:

Box 294  
Bernardsville  
New Jersey  
May 18, 1945

Dear Harold:

It was very nice to have your note about the Pulitzer. As practically co-father of the ballet I knew you'd be pleased! The announcement came as a complete surprise to me<sup>18</sup>—and just at the moment when it could help Martha most. I was delighted.

Since then, Martha has had a wonderful press in N.Y. I recently finished a version of the ballet for normal-sized orchestra (about 20 minutes long) and it will be premiered next Oct. by Rodzinski and the Philharmonic (not for publication as yet.) Boosey & Hawkes is engraving the orchestral version right away.

So I think we can all congratulate ourselves on a happy ending.

Regards  
Aaron

#### Notes

1. It had been planned to give the program on Mrs. Coolidge's seventy-ninth birthday. The program was, in fact, given a year later, on Mrs. Coolidge's eightieth birthday.

2. These clippings are no longer with the correspondence in the Coolidge Collection.

3. Erick Hawkins was a principal male dancer with Martha Graham. He was to create the role of the Husbandman in *Appalachian Spring*. He seems to have taken care of the business details of Graham's affairs as Spivacke did of Mrs. Coolidge's. The letter from Spivacke to Hawkins was dated December 17, 1943.

4. The Chávez was scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and string quartet.

5. The carbon in the Coolidge Collection in the Library is, of course, unsigned.

6. Chávez's first symphony, the *Sinfonia di Antigona*.

7. The earliest written record of this contact is Harold Spivacke's letter to Paul Hindemith of February 1, "writing to confirm the arrangement made on the telephone last week for a commission."

8. Spivacke had not, in fact, heard from Hindemith that he disapproved of Graham's script.

9. No copy of Hindemith's letter to Graham is in the Music Division's collections.

10. Graham writes "done."

11. Neither Milhaud's letter nor Mrs. Coolidge's wire is in the Coolidge Collection.

12. Spivacke does not mention to Mrs. Coolidge, as he does to Graham, that the work is missing its final *allegro*. Perhaps he reread Chávez's letter, which states that the final *allegro* is still to come, after writing to Mrs. Coolidge.

13. Graham writes—or her typist transcribes—this word as "would."

14. The "other letter" is not, alas, in the Coolidge Collection, even in carbon copy.

15. These are the dates on which the completed orchestral scores either arrived in Washington or were sent in photocopy to Graham. The piano scores, from which Graham was rehearsing, would have arrived earlier.

16. The 14th of August was a Monday in 1944.

17. Though the first Pulitzer Prizes were given in 1917, the prize in music was not established until 1942. The two works to win the Pulitzer Prize before *Appalachian Spring* were William Schuman's stirring cantata *A Free Song* and Howard Hanson's ascetic Fourth Symphony.

18. Spivacke had revealed in his letter of May 12 that he had done some discreet lobbying for the work, making sure that the judges on the Pulitzer Committee had a recording.

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WAYNE D. SHIRLEY is a reference librarian in the Library's Music Division. He has contributed articles on Victor Herbert, George Antheil, and George Gershwin to the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, and is currently editing the fourth movement of Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony.



# JAMES

# H.

PRIMITIVE  
AMERICAN  
FILMMAKER

# WHITE

Strangely overlooked by film historians is an original story line motion picture entitled *Love and War* made in 1899 by a young man, James H. White, then head of Thomas A. Edison's Film Department. It does not seem fair that a motion picture as unique in film annals as *Love and War*, White's little fictionalized version of the Spanish-American War period, never was accorded the attention it so surely deserves.

BY KEMP R. NIVER,  
A.S.C.,  
AND BEBE BERGSTEN

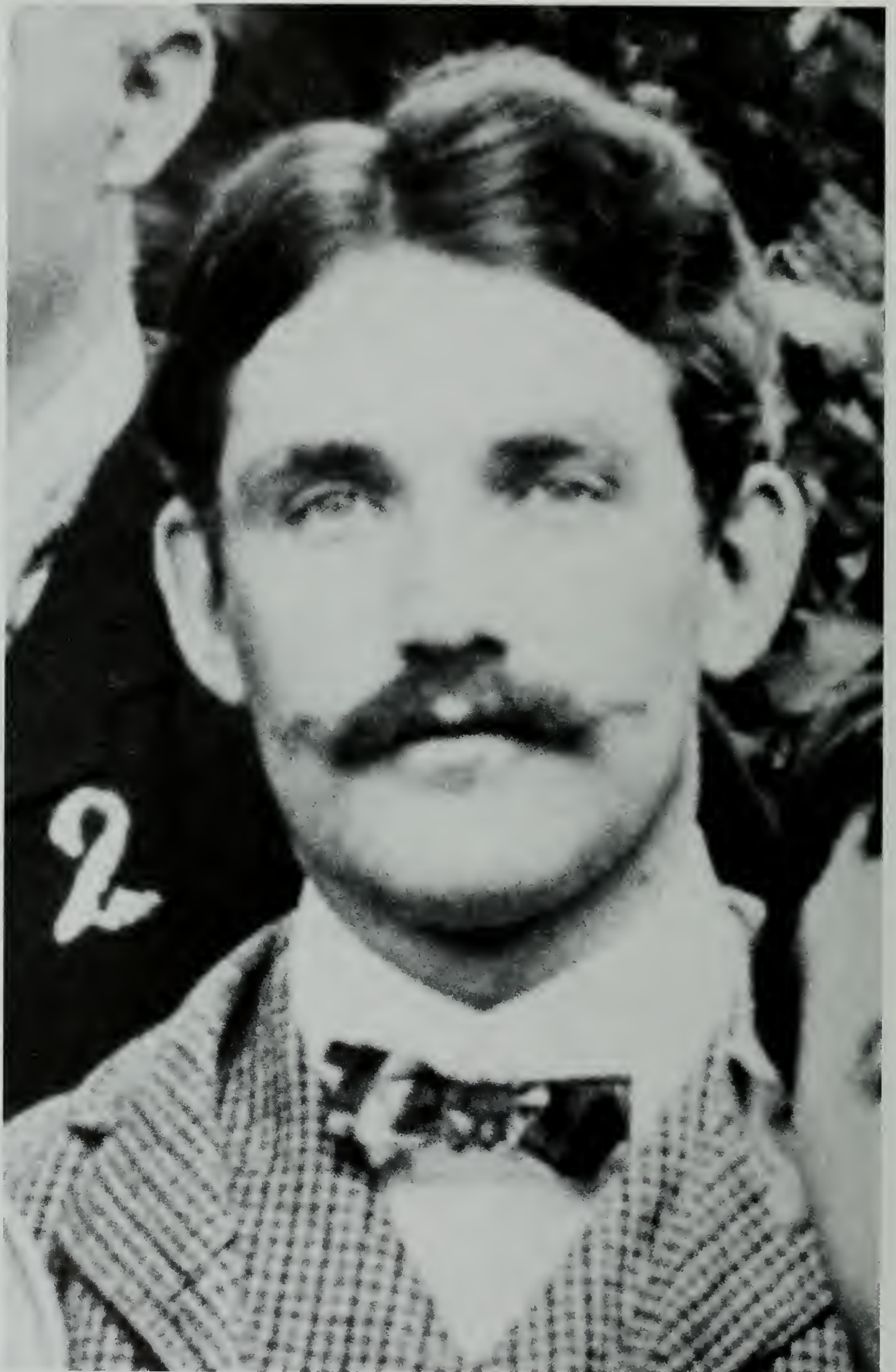




JAMES H. WHITE, WITH EDISON AND RAILROAD EMPLOYEES, ON LOCATION  
for *The Black Diamond Express* (1896).









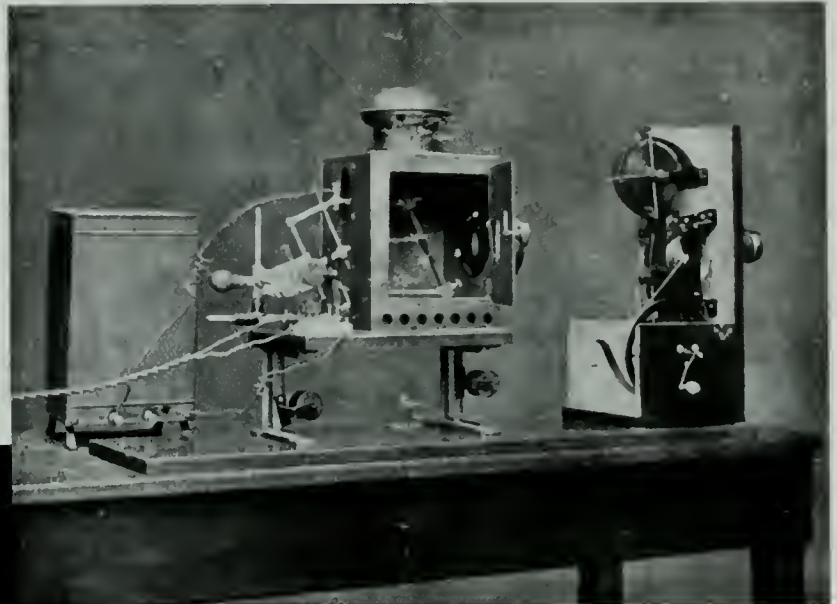
In the three-quarters of a century that has rolled by since the invention of motion pictures, another film, *The Life of an American Fireman*, has long been considered by these film historians to be the first story line motion picture ever made as well as the beginning of an art form. But Edison's Edwin S. Porter did not photograph *The Life of an American Fireman* until 1903, some four years after White's *Love and War*.

Moviegoers accustomed to today's stupendous cinema productions that sometimes are years in the making at ever more stupendous cost, would be astounded at how truly primitive motion pictures were when a film such as *Love and War* was made so many years ago. Most films of that period were barely longer than fifty feet, all photographed from a single camera position and with a running time of but a few minutes. The films were intriguing to viewers merely because

images moved, as if by magic. Since movement alone constituted the novelty, hardly any creativity was required from these first cameramen, who more often than not served as producer and director as well. What makes *Love and War* so remarkable is the ingenuity it reflects at such an early period of filmmaking.

Anyone interested in the first decade of motion picture making can rattle off without any effort the names and achievements of such forerunners as Edison, Dickson, Porter, Bitzer, and a handful of others, but

JAMES H. WHITE IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES, COMPLETE WITH HIS magnificent mustache. From the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Edison National Historic Site.



EDISON'S PROJECTING KINETOSCOPE MADE IT possible for any number of persons to look at a film simultaneously, as we do today. This development caused the peephole Kinetoscope to plummet in popularity.

THE EDISON KINETOSCOPE PEEPHOLE MACHINE. ONLY one person at a time could view a film.





IF THIS ACTUALLY IS CHARLES H. WEBSTER, HE BORE AN amazing resemblance to White, with whom he worked on films for a while. Both of them photograph as swashbuckling types. *From the History of Photography Collection, the Smithsonian Institution.*



few can tell you anything about James H. White, the man who made one of the earliest American story line films. White was the producer, author of the script, chief cameraman, and the principal actor in what, in all likelihood, was a unique film. Despite this remarkable achievement, White is seldom mentioned in the dozens of film history books now available. When he is, he rates only a line or two of unsubstantiated tales. Not one word of this pioneer filmmaker's actual accomplishments is ever mentioned.

Who was James H. White? What part did he actually play in the beginning of the motion picture business?

Facts about this man are surprisingly scarce, but we are reasonably certain he was born in 1873 in Nova Scotia, Canada, the son of a shipbuilder. We know he died in New York City in 1944 at the age of seventy-one. We know, too, he had a brother, Arthur, sixteen years his senior, who also worked as a photographer at the Edison laboratory in the 1890s. Arthur later be-

came the manager of a motion picture theater chain in New York and wrote a question-and-answer column for a trade magazine for many years.

Some of the photographs reproduced here we took from frames of films James H. White both acted in and directed during the early years he worked for Edison. These pictures reveal White to be a tall, handsome man of commanding appearance, with thick, black hair and a magnificent mustache.

Motion pictures had reached the great age of five years when Jim White, then twenty-one, began his lifelong association with the industry. Some facts concerning this period of his career were gleaned from his testimony as a witness when Edison sued the American Mutoscope Company, his leading competitor at the time, for patent infringement. This basic patent lawsuit is famous in film history as "The First Mutoscope Case," and is an important source of information about that period.

White, according to his testimony, was a resident of



The romance, now in its 6<sup>th</sup> edition  
is very well written. I must  
give you some of its action, and  
hope you may deem it worthy  
of finding a place among  
your books.

When I last saw you - when  
accompanied by Uzzanne  
I asked if I could not  
obtain from you some  
prints taken in your  
wonderful Kinetograph.  
What I wanted, were  
the illustrations of  
a sneeze. for  
publication in

Harper's Weekly.  
Might I then ask, if you  
would not kindly, have  
some nice looking young  
person, perform a sneeze  
for the Kinetograph?  
a series of these <sup>pictures</sup> would  
be produced in Harper's  
Weekly - and the  
text would be written  
by me.  
Could such a series  
be then prepared  
for me -?

Chelsea, Massachusetts, when he obtained work with  
the Holland Brothers, distributors of the Edison pho-  
nograph, in Boston in the summer of 1894. Holland  
Brothers had employed White to install Edison's newly  
invented peephole viewing device, the Kinetoscope,  
for them. White must have proved competent, for he

BARNET PHILLIPS, EDITOR OF HARPER'S WEEKLY MAGAZINE, CONCEIVED  
the idea of photographing a person sneezing to be used  
both as a film for a Kinetoscope as well as for an illustration  
in his magazine and wrote as follows to Mr. Edison on  
October 3, 1893, requesting that this be done: "When I last  
saw you accompanied by Uzzanne I asked if I could not  
obtain from you some prints taken on your wonderful  
Kinetograph. What I wanted were the illustrations of a  
sneeze, for publication in Harper's Weekly. Might I then ask,  
if you would not kindly, have some nice looking young  
person, perform a sneeze for the Kinetograph? A series of  
these pictures would be produced in Harper's Weekly—and  
the text would be written by me. Could such a series be  
then prepared for me?"

had been in Holland's employ for only four months  
when the firm had enough faith in his ability to send  
him off to install and operate Kinetoscopes for them at  
the Flower and Food show held annually at the Grand  
Central Palace in New York City.

The interchangeable use of the terms *Kinetoscope*  
and *Kinetograph* during this period has engendered  
endless confusion. But the machines were not one and  
the same. Edison patents make it clear that a Kinetos-  
cope was a piece of equipment designed solely for  
viewing films that had been photographed in a Kine-  
tograph, and the Kinetophone was a phonograph at-  
tachment included in the viewing box of a Kinetos-  
cope.

The main obstacle to making money with a Kinetos-  
cope was that only one person at a time could view a  
film so a number of the Kinetoscope peephole ma-  
chines, referred to as "plants" or "banks," were needed  
to accommodate as many viewers as possible.

In 1896, less than two years after the 1894 Flower  
and Food Show closed, improvement in motion pic-  
ture equipment made projection a reality. With Edi-  
son's new projecting Kinetoscope, it became possible  
for any number of persons to look at a film simulta-  
neously, as we do today, a development that caused the  
peephole Kinetoscope to plummet in popularity, and  
it quickly disappeared from the market.

A year before James H. White even was aware of  
motion pictures, much less how to make them, the  
World's Fair Columbian Exposition opened in Chi-  
cago in May of 1893. Norman C. Raff and Frank R.  
Gammon, two ambitious New Yorkers, set up the Ki-  
netoscope Company solely for the purpose of market-  
ing Edison's new peephole device. Raff & Gammon  
had decided the World's Fair in Chicago would be an  
ideal occasion to introduce the Kinetoscope to the  
public. To that end, and in conjunction with some  
other investors, Raff & Gammon made a partial pay-  
ment of \$10,000, a great deal of money for that day, to  
the Edison company and signed a contract for 150 of  
the new machines to be delivered before the opening  
of the Exposition. Shipment to Chicago was to be the  
responsibility of the buyers.

Now we come to a puzzling period in the history of  
the Kinetoscope. Many letters from the contracting  
parties exist complaining to Edison about the con-  
stantly changing delivery date of their 150 peephole



*H. P. Mills,*  
*100 Broadway, American Surety Building,*  
*New York.*

*Cable Address*  
*"Milted"*

RECEIVED

The Kinetograph Company

March 6th 1896.

R. Gannon Esq.

253 Broadway,

New York.

Dear Sir:

Mr Mills has handed me your favor of the 4th inst. Monsieur Jolie is the maker of the French film, but you can get full particulars by addressing L. Whiting c/o Anglo American Dept, Credit Lyonnais Paris

I enclose a small portion of one of Jolies films as it may give you an idea of the subject.

IT may interest you to know that the Folies Bergeres of Paris closes during the summer months, we had five Kinetoscopes on exhibition there last winter, and they took in big money.

Yours very truly,

*Graham Hope*

THIS LETTER TO RAFF & GAMMON OF MARCH 6, 1896, FROM A Mr. Graham Hope, makes it very clear that when it was possible to obtain enough prints to exhibit, Kinetoscopes proved to be money-makers.



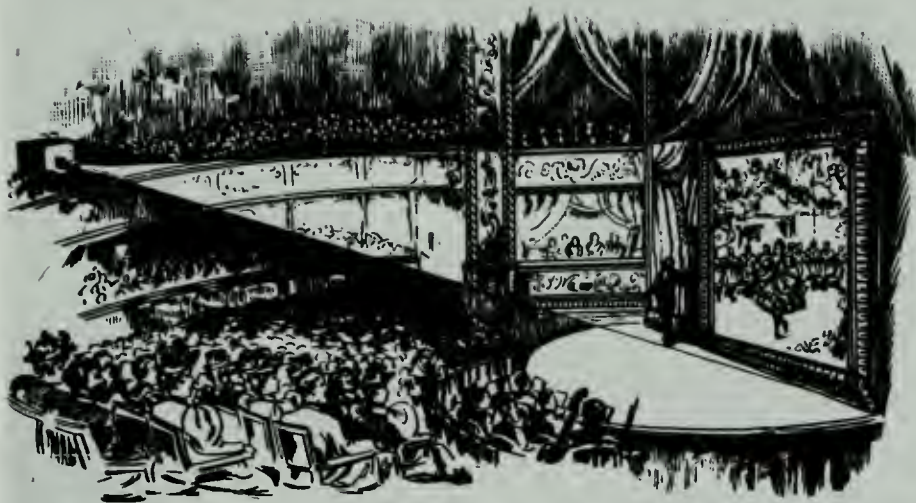
Kinetoscopes. William K. Laurie Dickson, department head and right-hand man of Edison in the development of motion pictures and related equipment, suddenly became gravely ill and spent the next few months in Florida recuperating. This, coupled with Edison's consuming interest in his magnetic ore ex-

traction process, to the exclusion of everything else including motion pictures, probably accounted for the delay in manufacturing the Kinetoscope machines.

But on June 27, 1893, a Mr. T. R. Lombard, writing on the letterhead of the North American Phonograph Company of Chicago, complained to Mr. O. Tate, Mr. Edison's personal secretary and also vice president of the North American Phonograph Company:

I told him [Benson, one of the investors in the 150 Kinetoscopes] . . . that it was not improbable that we would be in a position to arrange for a continuing interest in the matter with Mr. Edison when he him-





1896 "Motion picture -  
Kinetograph"  
**Raff & Gammon**  
(ORGANIZERS OF THE KINETOSCOPE CO.)

EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OF THE  
LATEST MARVEL

## The Vitascope

SOLE AGENTS FOR THE  
EDISON KINETOSCOPE . . .  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA  
THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH

PHONOGRAPH AND KINETOSCOPE SUPPLIES,  
ELECTRIC DESIGNS, ETC.

Postal Telegraph Building, 253 Broadway

New York, April 10, 1896.

N. C. R.

Mr. W. E. Gilmore, Gen. Man'gr.,

Orange, N. J.

Dear Sir:-

Have proper papers been filed with you for furnishing us  
films of Corbett-Courtney and Leonard Cushing fights?

We want some of these films, both for Kinetoscope use and for use  
on Vitascope, when you get clear stock.

As soon as you can secure the clear stock, we will send you a  
large film order.

Very truly yours,

*Raff & Gammon*

self saw how much injustice had been done us by his  
failure to carry out his part of the contract.

The investors had every right to be upset. They cal-  
culated they were losing about a thousand dollars a day  
by not having machines in operation.

Despite Mr. Lombard's letter and other complaints  
of a similar nature, we know of no records to indicate  
even one Kinetoscope was completed in time to be ex-  
hibited at the World's Fair Columbian Exposition in  
Chicago. Ironically, it was not long after the Colum-  
bian Exposition closed in the fall that Kinetoscopes be-  
gan to be available and soon generated quite a bit of  
interest. It is just possible that if the visitors to the Ex-

THIS LETTERHEAD WITH A STEEL ENGRAVING OF A VITASCOPE WAS USED  
as introductory advertising by Raff & Gammon before the  
public exhibition of the new invention. Note that Edison's  
Kinetograph was the machine that photographed the  
pictures; his Kinetoscope was the viewing device; his  
Kineto-phone was a phonograph attachment included in the  
viewing box of a Kinetoscope; and his Vitascope projected  
film onto a screen.



THE KOSTER & BIAL PROGRAM FOR THE WEEK  
commencing April 20, 1896. Not one of the  
fourteen motion pictures listed was more  
than fifty feet long.



# KOSTER & BIAL'S MUSIC HALL

Thirty-fourth Street, Herald Square.

KOSTER, BIAL & CO.,	Proprietors
ALBERT BIAL,	Sole Manager.
W. A. McConnell,	Business Manager.

Week Commencing Monday Evening, April 20, 1896.

Evenings, 8:15                      Saturday Matinee, 2:15

**THIS PROGRAMME** is subject to alterations  
at the discretion of the management.

1	OVERTURE, "Masaniello,"	Auber
2	<b>WM. OLSCHANSKY</b> The Russian Clown	
3	<b>CORA CASELLI</b> Eccentric Dancer.	
4	<b>THE THREE DELEVINES</b> In their original act "Satanic Gambols"	
5	<b>PAULINETTI and PICO</b> The Athletic Gymnast and Gymnastic Comedian.	
6	MONS. and MME. <b>DUCREUX-CERALDUC</b> French Duettists.	
7	<b>THE BROTHERS HORN</b> Assisted by MISS CHARLOTTE HALLETT "London Life."	
8	THOMAS A. EDISON'S LATEST MARVEL <b>THE VITASCOPE,</b> Presenting selections from the following: "Sea Waves," "Umbrella Dance," "The Barber Shop," "Barlesque Boxing," "Monroe Doctrine," "A Boxing Bout," "Venice, showing Gondolas," "Kaiser Wilhelm, reviewing his troops," "Skirt Dance," "Butterfly Dance," "The Bar Room," "Cuba Libre."	

**INTERMISSION 10 MINUTES**

IN THE GRAND PROMENADE  
Dr. Leo Sommer's Blue Hungarian Band.

Programme continued on next page.

position, many of whom came from far parts of the world, had been able to inspect the peephole Kinetoscope, their insistence upon availability of machines and films would have advanced the motion picture industry by many years.

James H. White's first connection with the fledgling motion picture business came in the fall of 1894 when the Holland Brothers in Boston sent him together with a plant of Kinetoscopes to the Food and Flower Show

in New York. Edison's moving picture device attracted considerable attention among the numerous visitors, most of whom were intrigued by this fascinating new invention, but the press definitely was not. The *New York Times* carried only two items pertaining to the Show. Both described other exhibits and did not deign even to mention the Kinetoscope. One of the two stories in the *Times* concerned a Japanese juggling act, while the other reported on De Witt Clinton's steam





**THE BLACK DIAMOND EXPRESS (1896) WAS PHOTOGRAPHED BY James White in Wysox, Pennsylvania, a town so small it no longer appears in most atlases, although it still boasts a post office. Charles Lee (passenger agent), Benjamin F. Hardesty (advertising agent, Lehigh Valley Railroad), William Heisse, Jim Duncan, and White (Edison employees), and some railroad men are shown on location on the railroad right of way in Wysox, Pennsylvania, on December 1, 1896.**

engine, one of the prime exhibits that year.

Nevertheless, the amount of money paid by visitors to view the wonders on film in the peephole Kinetoscope persuaded White to leave Holland Brothers to go into business on his own as a film exhibitor, something he evidently had wanted to do from the moment he first saw a Kinetoscope a few months earlier.

White succeeded in convincing Charles H. Webster, an electrician he had known in Boston, to become his partner in this venture. Three years White's senior, Webster had been an employee of the New England Phonograph Company of Boston, where his duties had been somewhat similar to White's at Holland Brothers. Webster also had learned how to install and operate Kinetoscopes.

The idea of buying a Kinetoscope bank from Holland Brothers and touring with it undoubtedly originated with the enterprising White, whose subsequent activities prove he was a born promoter, always ready to become involved in some new scheme.

When the Food and Flower Show came to an end in October of 1894, White and Webster, now the proud owners of a bank of Kinetoscopes, reasoned it would be smart to pick up a little extra cash by continuing to give Kinetoscope exhibitions in the city before starting on their planned trip. By the end of November, there appeared to be a lack of paying customers in New York City, so the partners decided it was time to begin their tour, which had to be limited to large population centers for two excellent reasons. First, White and Webster were well aware there would not be enough walk-in paying customers in small towns to defray the considerable expense of transporting by rail unwieldy Kinetoscopes and the batteries used to operate them. Second, the type of current needed to illuminate the opaque film used in a Kinetoscope, as well as to drive the electric motors, could then be found only in the largest American cities. Even the Chicago World's Fair Columbian Exposition lacked the type of electric power suitable for operating these machines.

Kinetoscopes were powered by Westinghouse direct



current electric motors requiring eight volts and fifteen amperes of electricity to energize them. This power usually came from four Edison wet-cell batteries weighing some twenty-five pounds each. One charge of the batteries would operate a Kinetoscope for approximately three viewing days.

During their ten months on the road, White and Webster certainly learned a great deal about their unprecedented enterprise. Problems with the Kinetoscopes they had not known existed began to surface even before they left New York City, and it is doubtful they had anyone to turn to for advice or help.

They also soon discovered, to their dismay, the prints they depended on very quickly became too worn and too scratched in the primitive Kinetoscopes for good viewing. Another blow was the virtual impossibility of obtaining a supply of replacement prints, let alone new subjects. Evidently the other departments of the Edison Manufacturing Company had higher priorities than the making of motion picture films.

The Kinetoscope Company, sometimes referred to as Raff & Gammon, had been established in New York City in 1893 solely for the purpose of marketing Edison's Kinetoscope. The earliest users of the Kinetoscopes were able to order a few prints, new and replacement, from the fifty-two titles listed in their catalog, dated October of 1894. No print exceeded fifty feet in length, and not one had a story line. A careful comparison of the titles in the Raff & Gammon catalog with those described in a booklet copyrighted by W. K. L. Dickson in January of 1894 (*History of the Kinetograph, Kinetoscope and Kinetophone*) indicates the majority of the films listed by Raff & Gammon were Dickson productions photographed in 1890 and 1891, none of which was copyrighted.

It does not seem as though many motion pictures were produced at Edison in the following two years, even though William K. Laurie Dickson was still working there. The famous film, *Edison Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze, January 7, 1894*, was the first motion picture to be assigned a copyright, although apparently it was not the first film ever submitted to the Copyright Office.

Mr. Dickson does not mention the genesis of *The Sneeze* in his booklet of 1894, but he does use a full page of frames from this tiny film as an illustration. By 1950, all that remained of this landmark motion picture was an eight- by ten-inch print on file in the Library of Congress archives.

An interesting sidelight on *The Sneeze* is how it came to be made. Barnet Phillips, editor of the prestigious *Harper's Weekly Magazine*, conceived the idea of photographing a man as he sneezed to be used both as a film for a Kinetoscope as well as for an illustration in his magazine and wrote to Mr. Edison on October 3, 1893, requesting that this be done.

If it strains one's credulity to believe that as few as fifty-two films, of fifty feet or less, equalled the total Edison output of exhibition prints for the first four years of production, it is even more of a strain to believe that any inventor or manufacturer of a machine would neglect or overlook the need for a product to render it usable; but actually this is what happened with the Kinetoscope. To be fair, everyone in the motion picture business was a neophyte. Raw stock was

hard to obtain, and the results of its use were both unpredictable and undocumented. Perhaps no one realized, either, that prints eventually would tear or scratch, nor was there then any way of determining how many times a print could be shown acceptably. And it undoubtedly came as a surprise to learn of the public's craving for a constant supply of new and varied subjects.

As with all pioneers, White and Webster were forced to work out solutions to this and other problems by themselves. The shortage of replacement prints was not the only dilemma these two had to cope with, for it soon appeared peephole viewing machines were not such a universal novelty as they had thought. Kinetoscope parlors already were in operation in a number of the larger cities outside of New York. White and Webster may have had crises to face, but so did their competitors. Many letters exist addressed to Edison from would-be exhibitors begging for replacement prints or for new subjects. Without moving pictures to show, a Kinetoscope became totally worthless as a source of income, but when it was possible to obtain enough prints to exhibit, Kinetoscopes proved to be money-makers.

It does not seem to have occurred to either White or Webster that their exhibit at the Flower Show was a success mainly due to the many people who attended the Show for other reasons idly dropping a nickel in a Kinetoscope as they walked by the machine. To make Kinetoscopes a paying matter, which White and Webster must painfully have learned, a public event on the order of a fair was needed to attract a large number of visitors. A Kinetoscope was not enough of a lure on its own.

But the most serious blow to the venture was a long-standing rumor, soon a reality, that Edison was about to market a screen projection machine. James H. White later testified in court that he had visited the Edison Manufacturing Works in October of 1894 at the suggestion of his then employer, Mr. Holland, to look at the new motion picture projection machine. Webster testified he, too, had seen a similar machine at Edison in May of 1895. White and Webster had begun their tour with a Kinetoscope plant in November of 1894 but certainly could not have gotten very far from New York if Webster was able to make "frequent visits to the Edison Works" in West Orange, New Jersey, as he stated in court in the same case.

It would be interesting to know what cities the two actually visited, if they made any money at all from their initial venture, or even if they recouped their investment, but so far this information has not come to light.

Taking all of the foregoing into account, it is not surprising to find that in September of 1895 both White and Webster were in Boston trying to sell their Kinetoscope plant outright. In this they were successful, and by January of 1896 Raff & Gammon also were arranging to dispose of their peephole Kinetoscope assets. White remained in Boston for two months after the sale of the Kinetoscope plant. Then he returned to New York City, where he felt there might be a better chance for finding employment in the extremely limited film world of the day, but there just were no openings. Eventually White managed to obtain employ-





JONES AND HIS PAL IN TROUBLE



JONES' INTERRUPTED SLEIGHRIDE



JONES' RETURN FROM THE CLUB



WHILE WORKING FOR EDISON, JAMES WHITE PRODUCED FOUR SHORT situation comedies in 1899. They all featured a man named Jones, played by White, who gets into various difficulties, mainly due to having had a bit too much to drink. These frame enlargements are made from the paper prints.





JONES MAKES A DISCOVERY



ment in Buffalo with J. M. S. Blauvelt, distributors of the Edison phonograph. In the meantime, he kept in touch with his expartner, Webster, who now was with Raff & Gammon in New York City.

In the spring of 1896 Edison finally gave in to the importunings of his American distributors by releasing his film projection machine, the Vitascope. With the Vitascope at last ready for commercial use, Raff & Gammon moved fast to implement their long-decided-upon plans. As early as March of 1896, they had begun promoting the Vitascope everywhere in the United States that electricity to operate it was available. On April 10, making use of their new engraved letterhead that illustrated the use of a Vitascope, Raff & Gammon ordered from the Edison Manufacturing company films for both the Kinetoscopes still being used and the new Vitascope. Raff & Gammon's letterhead also boasted that the firm had "exclusive control of the latest marvel, the Vitascope," but the official introduction of the device to the public was still to come.

At the same time, Raff & Gammon booked passage to Europe for Charles H. Webster to exploit the "latest marvel" for them there. Webster suggested to Raff & Gammon that they hire his erstwhile partner, White, as a replacement for him while he was abroad. White was one of the very few persons available at that time who had any sort of moving picture experience. Their offer to White, dated April 10, 1896, is reprinted here-with:

J. H. White  
Dear Sir:

Webster has had some correspondence with you about working with us, and we have concluded to offer you seventy five (75) dollars a month to work for us provided you come *almost* immediately or as soon as you can honorably leave Mr. B. We shall expect to use you to go out & set up Vitascopes and other miscellaneous work and also to operate the [next two words illegible] in our office as we shall probably send Mr. W. to Europe. We think that you will find us reasonable & pleasant people to be with and see no reason why we shall not have employment for almost indefinitely although we cannot now name stated period. Kindly wire your decision as we have another applicant for the position.

Yours truly,  
RAFF & GAMMON

This was precisely the opening White had been hoping for, and he accepted at once. White said, referring to this period in his testimony in court on behalf of the Edison Manufacturing Works:

I was engaged for a short while in helping perfect the machine [the Vitascope] in their salesrooms, and afterwards had charge of their first exhibition that was put on at Koster & Bial's.

White's "short while" was the approximately three weeks he spent working on the Vitascope in the Raff & Gammon salesrooms in order to get it ready for the show the firm intended to sponsor at Koster & Bial's Music Hall in New York City.

Finally all was ready, and at the end of April 1896 a landmark event in motion picture history took place. The showing at Koster & Bial's Music Hall on West



Thirty-fourth Street in Manhattan generally is conceded to be the first public exhibition of projected motion pictures in New York.

As is usual with landmark events, many individuals claim to have participated, often in capacities other than those they really performed, if indeed they even were present. Consider that twelve years after the Koster & Bial exhibition, the man quoted below had become such a well-known film distributor that he was interviewed by a trade magazine, *Views and Film Index*, dated August 1, 1908: "P. L. Waters put on the first motion picture exhibit at Koster & Bial's at a cost to the theatre of \$1,000 a week." But the facts about the original showing of projected motion pictures at Koster & Bial, taken from the court appearance of James H. White as a witness in the First Mutoscope Case, are as follows: "Mr. P. L. Waters was my assistant there." Years later Waters came to Hollywood for United Artists where he proved to be a capable administrator.

Neither the interview with P. L. Waters nor the court testimony of Jim White makes any mention of Edwin S. Porter in connection with the Koster & Bial showing. Yet the December 7, 1912, issue of another trade magazine, *The Moving Picture World*, printed an interview with Porter, famous by then, who reportedly volunteered the following:

By the way, if there is any public interest in this statement, I assisted in running the first motion picture that was shown in a theatre in New York—Koster & Bial's Thirty-fourth Street house, since torn down.

All of these men probably were at Koster & Bial's that particular week, although their specific contributions never will be clear. But it is James H. White, testifying under oath shortly after the event, whose word should carry the most weight as to the person in charge, especially since there were men in court at the time who surely would have challenged his statements had they not been true. No wonder the first decade of film history is so confusing!

The paths of White, Webster, and Waters were to cross frequently in the years to come, not always happily for any of them.

Webster missed all the excitement at Koster & Bial's as he was in Europe promoting the Vitascope for Raff & Gammon. He visited London, Paris, Vienna, and Budapest in an effort to sell Vitascopes, only to find that agents selling the Lumiere Cinematographé had been there before him.

The Cinematographé, the invention of the Lumiere Brothers of Lyons, France, was a combination of a motion picture camera and a projector, while a Vitascope was only a projector of motion pictures. Smaller than the Vitascope, the Cinematographé was easier to transport and consequently far more practical. For these reasons, the Cinematographé was more appealing to exhibitors. But what really sold the Lumiere invention was the easy availability of film subjects from France while the sole source of supply for the Vitascope was in faraway America. Letters to Raff & Gammon from Europe during this period underscore the writer's discouragement at not being able to obtain any new films to offer Vitascope buyers. The Cinemato-

graphé had an additional advantage over the Vitascope—an exhibitor could use it to make his own motion pictures.

Films for the Lumiere and Edison machines were not interchangeable then, although the Edison film width of 35mm later became the standard for both France and England and ultimately the world. As soon as a standard film width was in effect, an international exchange of moving pictures began.

With all the disadvantages of the Vitascope, poor Webster was not able to sell too many of the machines in Europe, and at the beginning of August 1896, after spending only four months abroad, a disillusioned Webster returned to New York. Almost as soon as he arrived in the city, he resigned from Raff & Gammon.

Webster then formed the International Film Company, together with an ex-Edison employee, Edmund Kuhn. Their company marketed both film and a projector, called the Projectorscope, evidently designed by the partners, but very little information exists today about their projector. We do not know how many were sold but it must have been enough to constitute competition for Edison, who sued the partners at the end of 1898. Neither Webster nor Kuhn appeared in court, but they did agree to cease manufacturing the Projectorscope and to desist from selling film.

One of the more interesting aspects of these early years is the seeming game of musical chairs played by employers and employees of the motion picture world. The same few individuals developed and manufactured equipment, produced films, and sometimes exhibited them. So it is not surprising to find Charles H. Webster, a year after the Projectorscope lawsuit, working in the New York office of Edison as a salesman of the projecting Kinetoscopes and motion picture films.

To regress a bit; about a year before the famous April 1896 showing of projected motion pictures at Koster & Bial, William K. Laurie Dickson resigned from the Edison Company and helped form the American Mutoscope Company in competition with Edison. Part of a letter of April 29, 1895, addressed to Dickson from Raff & Gammon follows. Mr. Raff, who signed the letter, again is grumbling about the lack of films for use in the Kinetoscope:

We have your favor of the 26th, inst., and are much disappointed that you were unable to take Capt. Ross before his departure from the City, but as we cannot control the weather, I presume the next time, we will have to see Mr. Dunn the weather-man, and get him to put on a bright day for us when we have an important subject to take.

We note your change of address after Monday the 29th; and also that you have resigned your position at the Edison Works.

We certainly wish you every success and trust that your withdrawal from the laboratory may not interfere with the work of making films and taking new subjects, as that would be very unfortunate for those of us who are in the the Kinetoscope business.

By October of 1895, Raff & Gammon had become so desperate for motion pictures to offer their equally desperate customers that they made an arrangement with Edison to furnish a camera and a cameraman to





THIS SELECTION OF FRAME ENLARGEMENTS FROM JAMES WHITE'S *Love and War* (1899) is taken from the paper prints. The versatile White played the lead role. The story concerns a young man who goes off to war where he is wounded in battle. He falls in love with his attractive Red Cross nurse, is promoted to captain for his heroism in battle, and returns home safely to his overjoyed parents. All in 200 feet!









make films for them on the rooftop of their office at 235 Broadway in New York. Unfortunately, we do not know the name of the cameraman, how many films he made, or the titles of any of them.

Dickson had been gone from Edison a little over a year when Mr. Edison added Pennsylvania-born Edwin S. Porter to his staff in the spring of 1896. Porter spent the next six months at the laboratory in West Orange, working as a machinist-mechanic to help in devising improvements on motion picture cameras and projectors.

White was still with Raff & Gammon, having gone there originally to handle their introduction of the Vitascope at Koster & Bial's Music Hall. He was still selling Vitascope at Raff & Gammon when he resigned in October of 1896 to join the Edison Manufacturing Works in West Orange, with the title of Manager of the Kinetoscope and Film Departments.

Hardly had White arrived at Edison in West Orange when Porter left. It appears Porter had become intrigued by the possibilities of the money to be made from film exhibition. He and a friend, Harry Daniels, an exvaudevillian, bought a Projectorscope from the Kuhn & Webster firm. Webster, it will be recalled, was White's partner in the 1894 Kinetoscope adventure. Porter first had wanted to purchase a projector from Edison, but Edison would not sell one to him, or to anyone else for that matter, as it would jeopardize the contractual arrangements made on his behalf by Raff & Gammon, his agents in this field.

Porter and Daniels, Porter said many years later, spent the next two years making their way throughout the West Indies and Central America showing motion pictures on the Projectorscope. With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Porter and Daniels returned to the United States in a hurry. Porter found work as a free-lance cameraman and by 1900 had returned to the Edison plant in West Orange. Harry Daniels seems to have dropped from sight.

William K. Laurie Dickson departed from Edison in April of 1895 at which time he turned over the rights of the four films copyrighted by him in 1894. No Edison film was copyrighted in 1895, but in September and October of 1896 a half-dozen, perhaps purchased from outside sources, were assigned Edison copyrights.

When James H. White arrived at West Orange to take over his new position as head of Edison's film department in November of 1896, he really was on his own, as none of the records kept by Dickson of how he made films ever were located, according to Mr. Edison's testimony in a later lawsuit.

Somehow White overcame this lack and immediately began producing films. In the next two months an unprecedented number, twenty, of his films were submitted for copyright. Not bad for a man who never had produced a motion picture before!

In 1897, the first full year White was in charge of filmmaking at Edison, close to one hundred motion pictures were produced, and by 1898 this figure had risen to nearly two hundred, an increase of almost 100 percent, another remarkable achievement, considering the primitive methods then current. Edison film production records for these early years are sketchy, so there is no way of determining just which titles can be

assigned to Mr. White, but in all likelihood most are his. After all, he was in charge of the Kinetoscope and Film Departments and a working cameraman too during that time.

White certainly had proved himself to be a capable, innovative, and imaginative filmmaker and, by the end of 1898, was very likely the best in the country.

A month before White joined Edison, the American Mutoscope Company, Edison's chief motion picture competitor, decided to record on film a famous locomotive known as No. 999, the engine for the New York Central Railroad's Empire State Express. No. 999 was considered to be one of the most beautiful locomotives ever fired up, and its fame rested on its performance back in May of 1893 when it set fantastic speed records. In fact, according to *American History Illustrated* of October 1896, "Nothing human had gone this fast before."

When American Mutoscope's film was released under the long title of *Empire State Express, N.Y. Central R.R.*, it turned out to be as much of a sensation as Locomotive No. 999 had been on its first run three years earlier.

The *New York Telegram* of October 15, 1896, was so upset by the film, they issued this solemn warning to the public:

When you can throw the picture of an express train on a screen in such a realistic way that persons who see it scramble to get out of its way and faint from fright, it's about time to stop.

If a film proves successful, and this is true even today, the theme immediately is appropriated by another filmmaker.

James H. White, totally unimpressed by the *Telegram's* warning, proceeded to make for Edison in December a nearly identical film starring the Lehigh Valley Railroad's pride, the Black Diamond Express. And surely it is no coincidence that both films are not too unlike one made earlier by Lumiere in France depicting a train rushing into a station. It, too, was a sensation.

White's *Black Diamond Express*, while patently a near duplicate of American Mutoscope's railroad film, was so popular the negative soon wore out. In the early years of filmmaking, negatives could not be used to make many more than twenty or thirty prints before deteriorating. Crude projectors also quickly took their toll on the prints themselves. It is not uncommon to note a print described in an early film catalog as being made from a new negative, an indication to the knowledgeable buyer that the subject had been shot over again.

For all these reasons, White found it expedient to repeat his success with another film, *Black Diamond Express, No. 2*, in April of 1897. It was one of the 131 motion pictures turned out at Edison that year, the majority of which must have been White productions. Also entered for copyright in 1897 were two Edison versions of *Receding View, Black Diamond Express*, showing the train from the rear as it sped away from the station.

White's little film of the Black Diamond Express by now had become a staple in the Edison catalog. In




# PICTURE SONGS

We have at last succeeded in perfectly synchronizing music and moving pictures. The following scenes are very carefully chosen to fit the words and the songs, which have been especially composed for these pictures.


## • LOVE AND WAR.

Uncholerick.

 The above is an illustrated song telling the story of a hero who leaves for the war as a private, is promoted to the rank of captain for bravery in service, meets the girl of his choice, who is a Red Cross nurse on the field, and finally returns home triumphantly as an officer to the father and mother to whom he bade good bye as a private. Length 200 feet, complete with words of song and music. \$45.00

## • THE ASTOR TRAMP.

Unchurn.

 A side-splitting subject, showing the mistaken tramp's arrival at the Wm. Waldorf Astor mansion and being discovered comfortably asleep in bed, by the lady of the house. Length 100 feet, complete with words of song and music. \$20.00  
Without music. (Unchurch) \$15.00

**Complete Set, 22 subjects, about 1,950 feet, \$400.00**

## OPERA OF MARTHA.

Unbefleckt.

The Second Act of this beautiful opera. Consists of five scenes, about 1,300 feet in length. 1. Duet outside the Inn. 2. Quartette inside the Inn. 3. Spinning Wheel Chorus. 4. Martha singing "Last Rose of Summer." 5. Good Night Quartette. This film shows a quartette of well-known opera singers acting and singing their parts in this ever popular opera. The subjects are taken with the greatest care and the films manufactured by the Edison Manufacturing Company.

Managers can arrange to produce this exhibition throughout the country, and can obtain a quartette of church singers to remain behind the scenes and sing the parts and produce a remarkably fine entertainment, besides giving a local interest to the same by utilizing local talent. If it is desired to do so, however, the quartette can be engaged to travel with the exhibition.

**Other operas and plays in preparation.**

**Complete Set, 5 scenes, about 1,300 feet, \$320.00.**

**Special Notice.** These films are taken under license of Thomas A. Edison, whose patents cover moving photographic films.

FROM AN EDISON CATALOG OF  
March 1900.



May of 1900 people evidently were still interested in paying to see trains on the screen as another title, *New Black Diamond Express*, turns up in the copyright records. Three years later, May 23, 1903, a paper print of what must have been a fourth Edison railroad film, *Lehigh Valley Express*, also was copyrighted.

The original *Black Diamond Express* of 1896 had one more moment of glory. The film was used as a scene in an amusing and little known moving picture called *Uncle Josh at a Moving Picture Show*, which bore an Edison copyright of January 1902. After a good six years of viewing trains thundering straight at them, audiences had become more sophisticated, and the train frightened no one.

When the Edison Vitascope made its debut at Koster & Bial's Music Hall in New York City in April of 1896, only three of the twelve films projected were recordings of actual events; the balance were vaudeville turns of one sort or another, plus a couple of films of boxing exhibitions. The fiction or story line motion picture had yet to make an appearance, at least in the United States. For a time the Edison company and American Mutoscope tried to outdo one another in turning out scenics, similar to the *Black Diamond Express* films, but by the end of the first decade of motion pictures this classification largely was taken over by newsreel companies, such as Pathé.

But in 1897 a continuing demand for pictures of faraway places existed. In order to fill this need, Thomas A. Edison dispatched James H. White and an assistant, W. Bleckyrden, to the Orient in October of that year. Mr. Edison, an eminently practical man, felt that as long as he was paying the fare, White should seek out and bring back to West Orange any fibers he could locate that might be useful to Edison in his constant effort to improve the light bulb.

White and his companion sailed for the Orient some time in October of 1897 aboard the SS *Doric* where they recorded on film two of the more popular shipboard events: *Afternoon Tea on Board the S.S. "Doric"* and *Game of Shovel [sic] Board on Board S.S. "Doric."*

The only source of information we have as to where White and Bleckyrden filmed is taken from the title of pictures they sent back to Edison. The two visited Hong Kong, Shanghai, Canton, and Macao. They also photographed in Tokyo, Yokohama, and then sailed for home from Nagasaki, perhaps stopping off in the Philippines, as later claimed by White, but if they did, there is no film extant to prove this assertion. At any rate, an average of four films a day, about fifty feet long, were photographed wherever they stopped. All of the films were of the newsreel, general interest type of motion picture, aimed at attracting viewers who could not afford the luxury of visiting such exotic places in person.

The forty titles eventually selected for copyright more than likely represent only a fraction, through no fault of theirs, of the films White and Bleckyrden took on this trip. In the late 1890s, numerous handicaps existed which prevented any cameraman from obtaining good results.

By May 19, 1898, the two men had arrived in Honolulu en route home. According to the local newspaper, *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, of that date:

Among the through passengers on the *Doric* are the following . . . W. Bleckyrden and James H. White of the Edison kinetiscope [sic], who have been travelling about taking pictures in the Orient . . . Messrs. Bleckyrden and White will take some pictures here today.

Of the films photographed in Hawaii that day, only four remain, with titles such as *Honolulu Street Scene*, *Kanakas Diving for Money*, Nos. 1 and 2, and *Wharf Scene*. These films average sixty-three feet, but unfortunately were not too clear photographically. The heat and humidity of the island undoubtedly affected the film and were a contributing factor to the poor results. White and Bleckyrden sailed for San Francisco the next day, May 11, 1898, and it was not long before other cameramen arrived to film the untouched beauty of the Hawaiian Islands. There is, however, no record of any earlier motion pictures having been made in Hawaii.

Judging by the titles of the almost two hundred films copyrighted by Edison in 1898, the world travellers did not return immediately to West Orange but continued making films all the way across the United States.

Eighteen ninety-nine was a very busy year for James H. White. He continued as head of Edison's Kinetoscope and Film Departments, as well as writing, directing, and acting in films, and sometimes even serving as cameraman. Amid the snow of February and March of that year, Jim White managed to produce four short situation comedies. All featured a man named Jones, played by White, who gets into various difficulties, mainly due to having had a bit too much to drink.

There was hardly any letup in film production at Edison for the balance of 1899. Not only were exhibitors clamoring for films but also one of America's most popular heroes, Adm. George Dewey, fresh from his Spanish-American War triumphs, had arrived in New York City, and there were naval parades on the Hudson and land parades in the city in his honor, all of which had to be recorded on film for an enthusiastic audience.

In November of that year, James H. White did something out of the ordinary. He sent three very different films to the Copyright Office in his own name. Two were films of the famous Jeffries-Sharkey prize fight, while the third was called *Love and War*.

The Spanish-American War was in progress while White was in the Orient. Even after he returned to the United States, the war continued to command considerable space in the press, which may have prompted White to design a film production, *Love and War*, with a story so basic screen writing instructors of today would term it a "classic."

The story of *Love and War* concerns a young man who goes off to war where he is wounded in battle. He falls in love with his attractive Red Cross nurse, is promoted to captain for his heroism in battle, and returns home safely to his overjoyed parents. All in 200 feet! Interestingly, this little motion picture was available with accompanying music for \$45, or silent for only \$15.

*Love and War* was distributed by the Thomas A. Edison Company with a note in the catalog to the ef-



MEMORIES are probably more fun than a big bank account, when you get along and start looking back; Capt. White complained:

"Listen, young feller, I'm not looking back. I'm looking ahead. I made over a million dollars out of movies and I dropped it all in Wall Street...I expect to make it again."

We'll get around to that tomorrow; let's talk about movies now. Look back, just for a minute, and tell the most exciting thing you ever did in connection with the movies:

"Guess it was filming the Battle of Manila off the deck of Admiral Dewey's flagship... that was quite a story.

"I was going around the world for Mr. Edison with a camera...looking for new fibers for filaments on the side.

"Out in Hong Kong, I got to know an officer of Dewey's ship—Patsy Hoorigan, he was. We used to get drunk together, good. I heard about Dewey going to sail and asked him could I go along. He said I couldn't.

"Next day, I walked out on the bridge and presented myself. Dewey was a real New Englander, talked like Cal Coolidge. He just said: 'Wal I'll be gosh-hanged!'

"I told him I had accidentally

fallen asleep aboard. He yelped: 'Yew're a gosh-hanged liar, but I cain't throw you overboard now'.

"And that's how I got the pictures of the Battle of Manila."

The other night, Capt. White met the first woman who ever appeared in motion pictures, Annabelle Whitford Buchan. He had known her—she used to go with one of Edison's sons. We expected him to plunge off into romantic reminiscence. But no: with considerable jealousy, he said:

"You know, she was beautiful. She didn't have a grey hair and all of her teeth were her own!"

fect that it was "taken under license of Thomas A. Edison." There is no record today of how many prints of this classic 1899 film were sold, but it remained in the Edison catalog for the next four years.

James H. White may have had a busy year in 1899, but he was not too busy to take time to be interviewed for the *Brooklyn* (New York) *Daily Eagle* of December 31 about his exploits. A year later that article appeared in two issues of the Edison house organ, the *Phonogram*, as reprinted here.

The article reveals Mr. White's enthusiasm for his assignments, even though he does seem a trifle confused here and there as to the exact dates of certain happenings. There is little doubt, however, that Jim White took some part in every event he so glowingly describes. Years later, a researcher who had interviewed White on several occasions, said he had met many a storyteller in his time but White, whom he

characterized as a "spellbinder," topped them all.

For the next four years, White continued to produce motion pictures for the Edison company. In February of 1903, Mr. Edison sent White abroad to handle his National Phonograph interests in Antwerp and London. With the exception of regular trips to New Jersey, White remained in Europe until 1908, when he decided to become, once again, a film exhibitor. His venture could not have been a very profitable one because records show that in 1909 James H. White was working for the Edison Manufacturing Company as a director and cameraman at the Edison Bronx studio.

The balance of James H. White's career was involved, one way or another, with motion pictures, usually on his own. He died in New York City in 1944. White's last interview, in the September 22, 1939, issue of the *New York Daily Mirror*, confirms he was still a "spellbinder."



## AROUND THE WORLD WITH A KINETOSCOPE

Few travelers have brought home with them such vividly realistic impressions of foreign lands as James H. White of the Edison Manufacturing Company has contributed to the delectation of his fellow men. The most interesting point of Mr. White's impressions, it should be explained, are upon several thousand miles of Kinetoscope films.

Without doubt Mr. White has taken more photographs than any other man living. A kinetoscope photograph is but an inch wide. It is made by the turning of a crank at an average rate of 2400 a minute. Mr. White has been industriously turning the crank for the last five years. The number of single photographs he has taken runs high into the millions. He has photographed the religious and social ceremonies of every tribe of Indians in the United States, has made photographic expeditions into Mexico, Alaska, Cuba, China, Japan and Siam. Wherever an important public gathering is held, there White can be seen with his little polished oak box turning the crank, like an organ grinder trying to make up for lost time. Nearly all the vast quantity of moving pictures now on exhibition in all parts of the civilized world were made by him. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. White knows something about moving pictures himself.

[Article has picture of White at this point.]

It is interesting to learn from this high authority that moving pictures are more popular in Europe than in the United States. More than half of the enormous output of the Edison Company goes to Europe. More interesting still, Spain is the heaviest buyer of kinetoscope pictures. The most popular subject—think of it—is the inauguration of McKinley.

Frequent negotiations with barbaric or semi-civilized peoples have developed the diplomat trait in Mr. White's make up. Particularly, in dealing with the Indians, a high degree of diplomacy is required. Long contact with the pale face has filled the mind of the noble red man with sordid commercial instincts, almost to the exclusion of all other sentiments. Nowadays when an Indian sees a camera leveled at him he covers his face with his hands, and, rushing up to the photographer, demands a fee of 50 cents for the privilege of taking his picture.

One of Mr. White's earliest experiences with Indians was the Santa Clara Pueblos at Santa Clara, New Mexico. Mr. White wanted to photograph one of the Santa Clara's peculiar dances. He called on the head men of the village. The head men said they would consider it. After two days profound reflection the head men called a town meeting to hear Mr. White's proposal. Mr. White stood up in the center of a solemn circle of red men, women, children and dogs and explained at great length what he wanted to do, why he wanted to do it and when and where and how. Particularly he elucidated the precise value of the privilege he sought. Then he repeated his desire and offer from beginning to end, going still more into details. By request he repeated the proposition several times. Then he retired to permit the idea to percolate through the Pueblo comprehension. After three days of deep thought the town people reached the conclusion

that they were willing to grant the concession provided the compensation could be made satisfactory. It took two days more to settle upon the sum of \$20 as the correct price. The \$20, all in good silver coin, had to be paid over before the Pueblos would even allow Mr. White to set up his tripod. At last all preliminaries were arranged. The dance began. White seized the crank and began to turn.

Kinetoscope cameras in those days were relatively crude affairs. The mechanism made a great clatter. It was too much for the nerves of the Pueblos. With one accord they dropped blankets and all other impedimenta and fled—fled for their lives. They hid behind rocks and adobe houses. Nothing could induce them to face that terrible camera again. White entreated, he expostulated, painful as it is to say so, he even went so far as to swear! but it was all to no purpose; the Pueblos would not risk their lives and their very souls in front of such a diabolical machine, and that was all there was about it. Mr. White left without any photographs; likewise without his \$20.

At other reservations he was more successful. He secured several thousand yards of pictures of all the curious incidents of ration day, dances and other events of reservation life.

Then he went to Mexico, where he photographed everything that could be persuaded or bribed into moving, for, of course, he wanted only moving pictures, from the Rio Grande to the city of Mexico. He ended his triumphal tour with an exhibition of moving pictures in the castle of Chapultepec for the edification of President Diaz. The President was delighted.

When Li Hung Chang visited Grant's tomb in N. Y. White was there with his kinetoscope. His machine secured circumstantial evidence that four of New York's finest were subjected to the unspeakable humiliation of carrying what in police lingo is known as a "chink," which being interpreted signifies they carried the chair of the distinguished Chinese Statesman. Newspapers sympathized and condoled with the outraged policemen, but the disgrace never can be wiped out. Mr. White gave Li Hung Chang a private exhibition of the kinetoscope which so delighted the venerable statesman that the exhibition was repeated for Li Hung Chang and a select company of officials when White went to China soon afterward. This created such a sensation that the exhibition had to be repeated at the Imperial Palace. But when the entertainment ceased and the photographer got down to business, his troubles began. He wanted to photograph army drills. But the army never had been photographed, consequently there was no precedent for granting the desired permission. Therefore such a thing was not to be thought of. No self-respecting Chinaman would think of doing anything his ancestors did not do four thousand years ago. When White tried to photograph the rabble on the streets, the same difficulty rose. Kinetoscopes were not in common use four thousand years ago, therefore, every pig tailed citizen of the Celestial Empire felt it incumbent upon himself to prevent the use of kinetoscope cameras by any means in his power. When White set up his tripod at Canton, hoping to get a street scene, he was mobbed with a whole souled energy that the Chinese only display when engaged in the pleasing diversion of killing foreign devils. He and his assistant fled for their lives. Fortunately they were near the



British custom house, which they managed to reach after receiving bad bruises from stones and clubs. They were covered with mud and their instrument was broken. Captain Healy and his force at the custom house had a sharp encounter with the mob, but it was finally beaten off.

White concluded after this experience that he did not really want any Canton photographs and never had wanted any. He went to Hong Kong, where he trained as a sprinter before attempting to make any more photographs. Chinese prejudice was equally strong in Hong Kong and all other cities he visited, but by the means of strategy and phenomenal leg work he contrived to get some pictures. The idea of a voyage up the Yangtse-Kiang appealed to him, so he embarked upon a sampan. By this time he understood China well enough to take the precaution to embark with a large and well armed party. The sampan was scarcely under way when it was attacked by pirates. There was a sharp fight in which six pirates were killed and four of the sampan's crew were wounded. White made no effort to help defend the vessel. Instead he made a frantic rush for his camera, set it up and secured a hundred yards of pictures of the most interesting part of the fight.

From China he went to Japan, where he found the natives much less belligerent. Of course, the first thing Mr. White had to do was to give an exhibition at the Imperial Palace for the benefit of the Mikado. The Mikado was enraptured. He gave Mr. White to understand that next to himself of course, he (White) was the greatest thing that ever happened. Naturally, after this White found his pathway strewn with roses. Officials sat up nights studying how they could arrange to give him everything he wanted and all the things he hadn't thought of.

While he heroically stood to his crank it became evident that the zealous officials were determined to have him photograph everybody and everything in the Empire. Then he fled South. He worked his industrious way through the Philippines, Siam and the Straits settlements and was headed for India when he was called home to photograph the Cuban war. He contrived to get to Santiago in time for the battle of San Juan, telegraphing on his way to Shafter to postpone the assault on San Juan until he could get his camera set up in a good place. Inadvertently he set his camera up directly in the path of a Mauser bullet, which seemed in a great hurry to get somewhere. The result was that both White and the camera were sent home for repairs.

From the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Sunday, December 31, 1899.

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KEMP R. NIVER, A.S.C., is an industrial film cameraman-producer whose interests in the history of motion pictures have almost transformed his avocation into a vocation. For ten years he was engaged in restoring motion pictures in the Library of Congress collection. This entailed restoration of over two million lineal feet of film taken between the years 1894 and 1912, as well as some made between 1912 and 1915. His motion pictures on film restorative processes have been shown at film festivals in Europe and the United States.

In 1955 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded him an "Oscar" for his work, and the American Society of Cinematographers elected him to membership. At present he holds the position of curator of their museum. He is a Life Fellow of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers and has been a contributor to such publications as the monthly magazine of the American Society of Cinematographers, *International Photographer*, and *Variety*. He has served as a consultant to many museums involved with the history of motion pictures both here and abroad.

Mr. Niver is also the author of *Early Motion Pictures: The Paper Print Collection in the Library of Congress*, edited by Bebe Bergsten and published by the Library in 1985.

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Bebe Bergsten is the author of *The Great Dane and the Great Northern Film Company*, which is based upon sixteen films that she discovered were produced by the Danish Great Northern Film Company from 1911 to 1912. Miss Bergsten has edited the following film history books written by Kemp Niver: *Motion Pictures from the Library of Congress Paper Print Collection, 1894-1912*; *The First Twenty Years*; *Mary Pickford, Comedienne*; *Biograph Bulletins*; *D. W. Griffith's The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*; and *Early Motion Pictures: The Paper Print Collection in the Library of Congress*. She is also the editor of *One Reel a Week* by two of America's motion picture pioneers, Fred J. Balshofer and Arthur C. Miller.

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James White's films are part of the Paper Print Collection in the Library of Congress which is housed in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. Kemp Niver restored the over two million lineal feet of film which comprise this collection of movies made between the years 1894 and 1915.



# UNMASKING FEELINGS

## THE PORTRAYAL OF EMOTIONS IN THE BIOGRAPH STUDIOS FILMS OF 1908-1910

M

OST OF US WEAR MASKS VERY SUCCESS-  
fully. When an emotional situation does arise,  
we try to keep control over our emotions, al-  
though no doubt we express some of our true  
feelings. Yet both in nineteenth-century theater  
and in early film, the essential aim was to com-  
municate the innermost feelings of the actor. In  
the theater this was done by gesture. In film, this  
privileged view was increasingly accomplished by  
the use of the dominant narrative codes of the  
cinema, such as the close-up and the shot-  
reaction shot. What is most interesting about the  
Biograph films is their marking the transition  
from one set of visual codes to another.

The manner in which gesture was used in Bio-  
graph films from 1908 to 1910, however, leads  
one to ponder the general subject of theatrical  
gesture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth  
centuries. A close correlation is often noted be-  
tween the acting styles in late nineteenth-century theater and early  
twentieth-century film. But, while one can see certain similarities among  
the actors of the period, there was no one acting style then, any more than  
there is today.<sup>1</sup> The theater was going through a period of transition from  
a sentimental and flamboyant style toward one of psychological realism.  
The difference in acting styles is best exemplified by the contrast of the  
method of the emotional Mrs. Leslie Carter and the subtle, realistic style  
of Minnie Maddern Fiske.<sup>2</sup> So, assuming the work at Biograph reflects a  
theatrical tradition of gesture, which tradition is being reflected?

Certain actors like George Gebhart or Marion Leonard present an emo-  
tional style of gesture. By 1910, we see more of actors like Henry Walthall  
and Frank Powell, whose actions tend to be far more naturalistic. It is very  
important that we have a thorough knowledge of the various acting styles  
of the period before we rush to judgment. When comparing the 1908 film  
with some older forms of theatrical gesture, one must be aware that the  
style of gesture used by Griffith in 1908 did not last long; this period was  
one of rapid change both in theater and film.

BY COOPER C. GRAHAM









**SWEET AND TWENTY.** ESPECIALLY IN THE COMEDIES, BILLY QUIRK SEEMS to be playing to an imaginary third row.



**THE TEST.** ARTHUR JOHNSON AND CHARLES CRAIG REACT TO Marion Leonard's charms. This gesture seems to be derived from the stage and is still a much-used device in burlesque.

A second difficulty in a direct comparison is that motion pictures present totally different problems from the stage. *Stage to Screen*, perhaps the best book written on the relation of stage to early film, proposes the thesis that trends in theater production in the last part of the nineteenth century in many ways were a prophecy of film.<sup>3</sup> But these points of reference between theater and film become tenuous in any discussion of theatrical gesture. For instance, Stuart Chenoweth points out that there is evidence that because of "audience naiveté" the actors were asked to broaden their acting styles for motion pictures.<sup>4</sup> If this is so, the cliché that overwrought expression and overdone gesture is an unfortunate legacy from the theater is at least put in doubt.

Chenoweth also quotes from A. E. Smith, an early figure at Vitagraph, to show an additional distortion of gesture in early film:

actors were instructed to speed up their movements as well as to exaggerate them to achieve the effect of excitement and intensity. For action in the foreground players were advised to move somewhat slower than normal speed to prevent the blurring of a rapid succession of movements on the film.<sup>5</sup>

Billy Bitzer tells a similar story about Griffith himself. Evidently Griffith used so much gesture when he first started film acting that the orthochromatic film registered it all as a blur.<sup>6</sup> So gesture is already going through changes in the transition from theater to film, simply in the process of being photographed. But aside from these small problems, the major one remains. Film was silent while the popular five-act play of 1900 was still an extremely wordy form of theater. Considering that the film James O'Neill made of his famous *Count of Monte Cristo* was silent, how can we ever be sure how much of a pure document we are actually seeing? We will never know what changes were necessary, and the problems become even more complex with the Biograph films.

Certainly in terms of form, much of the gesture seems quite theatrical. A lot of Billy Quirk's acting, especially in the comedies, looks like pure theatrical shtick, full of stage gesture and seemingly played to an imaginary audience. Another example of theatrical acting is the double take of Arthur Johnson and Charles Craig at the charms of Marion Leonard as she walks past in *The Test*. Until the demise of burlesque a few years ago, this was still a much-used gesture. In *The Call of the Wild*, Florence Lawrence assumes a position with respect to the camera that seems to be based on theatrical mise-en-scène. It might be pointed out that all these gestures are reactions, and reactions are of course important in cinema as well as theater, but the form of these gestures is theatrical.

But while the gestures may be theatrical, quite often they perform a cinematic function. In *The Lonely Villa*, for instance, Griffith uses the gestures of the actors to denote the presence of the thieves in off-screen space. Adele deGarde points to off-screen space, an excellent device to suture the scene to the preceding ones and to build suspense. In the same movie, the tension is built up by showing the actors listening to what is presumably going on in off-screen space. In



this case the gestures may be theatrical but the functions of the gestures are filmic. Even at this period in the history of film it becomes quite difficult to sort out that which is intrinsically theatrical from that which is not.

Clearly the Biograph films document gestures, but the precise relation of the acting styles of the Biograph players to the contemporary theater can be the subject of much debate. In the same way, gesture itself is clearly being altered by the films, and in the process is losing some functions and gaining new ones.

I propose that there is a close relationship between the use of gesture in the Biograph films and Griffith's use of the dominant narrative codes of cinema in his later work. In other words, because Griffith developed the cinematic forms of narrative film into a system, the same narrative functions that had been performed in the theater by gesture were to be performed in the cinema by other means.

It has been pointed out in the past few years that the cornerstone of bourgeois cinema is the attempt to place the spectator in the emotional position of the actor.<sup>7</sup> The argument states that the spectator is placed (or forced) into this position by the dominant codes of narrative cinema, which include the close-up, the point-of-view shot, and the shot/reaction shot. Griffith has the reputation of having perfected these devices into a cinematic language system in which the emotions of the actor become totally readable and can be shared by the spectator. Indeed the apotheosis of this kind of cinema could be *True Heart Susie*, in which the lingering close-ups seeking out the emotions on the face of Lillian Gish are as stylized as Chinese opera. In standard film criticism, this system of cinematic devices is usually considered to be a great improvement over the use of long shots which forced the actors to express their emotions by means of gesture. Thus Rudolf Arnheim states:

Stage actors, who are obliged on account of the poor optical conditions of the theater to play everything with overstatement, are accustomed to exaggerated effects. This technique, however, soon proved to be unsuitable and superfluous for film use, since the most insignificant gesture can be seen quite clearly owing to the tremendous enlargement of the picture when it is seen on the screen.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, Arnheim was right, at least about the fact that restrained acting is generally most effective in the cinema. But what he does not discuss is the fact that standard nineteenth-century gesture and Griffith's use of cinematic device both try to solve one common problem: How can an actor express his feelings most effectively so that every nuance of his emotions is communicated to the audience? This idea seems unremarkable, but when one thinks about it, the idea that an actor's innermost emotions and psychology should be made manifest to the audience is quite remarkable and certainly not naturalistic.

There is no doubt that in the nineteenth century theatrical gesture was a coded language system designed to express emotion. In this context, the Delsarte system of gesture was an especially powerful influence on American acting in the last part of the nineteenth



**THE LONELY VILLA.** TWO EXTREMELY INTERESTING AND CINEMATIC gestures. In the first frame enlargement Adele de Garde reacts to off-screen action by a theatrical gesture. In the second, reaction is indicated by the attitude of listening.







**HIS WIFE'S VISITOR.** HERE MARY PICKFORD IS CONCEIVING THE IDEA OF making her husband jealous. Perhaps only she could dominate a scene with her presence, as we see here.



century.

François Delsarte was a French actor who had evolved a system of gesture and acting while he was at the Paris Conservatory. He declared that man's fundamental moral nature has three aspects: physical, mental, and moral. These aspects are conditioned and modified by man's normal, concentric, or eccentric states of being. The normal state is the calm state, the concentric inclines the individual toward concentration and inversion, while the eccentric state impels him toward expansion and extroversion. But perhaps most important for our purposes is the following statement:

The fundamental aspects of man's nature, modified by his state of being, have a special apparatus for their expression in which each organ of the body participates. Every thought, sentiment, emotion, or sensation arising from man's triple nature is reflected and expressed in a characteristic way through his physical body.<sup>9</sup>

This concept of the body as a physical reflector of the emotions seems central in all the literature on the Delsarte system. Thus Edward Barrett Warman states:

The Delsarte system is founded on the great principle of the law of correspondence; that is, every expression of the face, every gesture, every posture of the body corresponds to or is but the outward expression of an inner emotion or condition of the mind, be it one of beauty or ugliness. . . .

Every movement a man makes is a betrayal of his character, an unconscious escape of the condition of his inner life,—the *impressions*. There is a revelation in the curl of the lip, the toss of the head, the stamp of the foot,—the *expressions*. . . .

Bear in mind, then, that Delsarte's philosophy is the philosophy of expression,—the revelation of the inward by the outward agencies. Everything we produce is merely the form of what exists in our mind. Every stroke of the artist's brush is made within ere it glows on the canvas. In the actor, every accent, every inflection, every gesture, is but the outer reverberation of the still small voice within. The idea as separate from the object exists prior to the object itself, and the outward work is but the material form,—the effect of the spiritual idea or spiritual form. **THE AFFECT PRECEDES THE EFFECT.**<sup>10</sup>

COMPARE MARY PICKFORD'S GESTURE IN *HIS WIFE'S Visitor* with this Delsarte pose for meditation. From John Wesley Hanson, Jr., *The Popular Entertainer*.







RAMONA. RAMONA, PLAYED BY MARY Pickford, discovers the body of her husband, who has just been killed by the man on the right. Compare this gesture with these three Delsarte stages representing anguish. From Edward B. Warman, *Gestures and Attitudes*.





There are several important concepts generated by the Delsarte system. First, the importance of gesture over language is emphasized, which has interesting implications for silent film. Second, the whole idea that every movement of an actor's body must express emotion is certainly a formalized, antinaturalistic concept. The text by Warman is especially striking in its platonic definition of realism in acting. In the United States, at least, this period in the history of the theater is usually defined in terms of increased naturalism. Yet Warman certainly is not speaking in these terms, and the Delsarte system clearly has other goals in mind besides naturalism. As another writer stated:

The whole system of the Delsarte study of expression is based upon the idea that outward manifestations of the human organism are the result of inward states: that the external motions are caused by internal emotions.<sup>11</sup>

Previously in this essay I questioned the idea that the Biograph films provide a document of pure theatrical style. Neither am I going to suggest here that all the Biograph players were even unconscious disciples of the Delsarte system. The system was criticized from its introduction into the United States as being over-mechanical. For instance, one text gave the following directions to produce the emotion of grief:

The right foot slightly advanced; the left arm dropped close to the side; right arm advanced a little to the front, both hands open, the palm of the right

hand downward; the head leaning forward, the eye directly downward, with lids drooping.<sup>12</sup>

One can fairly ask whether all this is necessary or even useful. Is it necessary to advance the right foot slightly to show grief? But in all the criticisms of the Delsarte system, no one criticized the central idea that our emotions are expressed through our gestures. As Warman said, "Hence, when any one says he does not believe in the Delsarte Theory of Expression, it is equivalent to saying that he does not believe in nature's laws."<sup>13</sup>

And whatever the system's shortcomings, there is no doubt that it had a profound influence in the United States. It was introduced here in the 1870s by Steele MacKaye, who established the first dramatic school in the United States, a school which was to become the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He lectured extensively on Delsarte principles, taught them to other actors, and made them the basis for his drama school. It should also be remembered that when a good actor such as MacKaye used the principles, the performance could strike the critics as being sincere, intense, and free from rant. The Delsarte system had an impact on three acting students who were to become quite impor-



*THEY WOULD ELOPE.* ONCE AGAIN WE SEE MARY PICKFORD CLASPING her hands, this time, however, to express joy. In the Delsarte method, clasped hands can mean either joy or sorrow—the hands emphasize the facial expression.



COMPARE MARY PICKFORD IN *THEY WOULD ELOPE* WITH Hanson's representation of the emotion joy. From John Wesley Hanson, Jr., *The Popular Entertainer*.



tant to American acting. These were Samuel S. Curry, who became head of the Curry School of Expression; Dr. Charles K. Emerson, who became head of the Emerson College of Oratory; and Franklin H. Sargent, who became president of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.<sup>14</sup> It also influenced an unfortunate generation of schoolchildren who had to undergo lessons in elocution. Some of the more bizarre books on the Delsarte system were not written for professional actors, but for parlor entertainments. The pity is that these books were generally written by hacks who had not actually studied the Delsarte system, one reason that it acquired such a bad name. I remember my own father reciting, "I point with pride . . . but I view with alarm" with gestures learned in a 1910 speech class. But the system could be used with taste and sensitivity and certainly influenced a large number of actors in the United States. Whether or not Griffith's actors were directly influenced remains a matter of speculation.

Although there may not be definite information linking the Biograph players to the Delsarte system, there is evidence that Griffith was strongly influenced by an actress whose style was not dissimilar. In 1906, Griffith was an actor in the Nance O'Neil company in



CHARLES INSLEE IS ACTUALLY EXPRESSING JOY AT THE RESCUE OF HIS child in this frame enlargement, using a gesture described in John Hanson's book. In another context, the character could easily be threatening the mother and child.



California. Miss O'Neil was a first-rate actress and Griffith appears to have been quite impressed with her acting. Billy Bitzer stated that when he first worked with him, Griffith used an excessive amount of gesture, and that Griffith learned this style from Nance O'Neil and other stars of the theater.<sup>15</sup> Gesture was quite important in Miss O'Neil's style. A 1904 article from *The Critic* described her acting style as follows:

Evidently as far as natural endowment goes, for the great position of leading "tragedienne" of her time, in English-speaking countries she has no near rival. Nothing in the way of training, either, seems to be lacking. From her beautiful arm and hand and most exquisite use of wrist and the open fingers in gesture—nobody since Edwin Booth has displayed such hand-play—one could construct all the figures of the traditional poses, as given in Delsarte and the old French works for the expressing and heightening of all the various passions and emotions. As with arm and hand, so with the whole superb figure, all of its movements were "express and admirable"; yet its arrests of motion and its repose did the most powerful work. The way the tall figure has stalked or stopped short, or merely stood and waited for the blows of fate . . . has been enough at times to fix the house in stillness that could be felt and heard.<sup>16</sup>

In comparing the acting styles of several actors in the Biograph studios to the Delsarte system, I am using the Delsarte system only as a paradigm of the possibilities of nineteenth-century gesture, a system of expression that was in the air, and that was especially useful to the new film industry. On this basis, I believe that several interesting comparisons can be made.

For instance, consider some of the gestures of Mary Pickford. In *His Wife's Visitor*, a young bride, in order to make her husband jealous, conceives the idea of pretending that another man has been visiting her. The frame enlargement of Mary Pickford getting this idea is quite similar to the Delsarte pose for meditation. *Ramona* seemed to be an important picture for Pickford at Biograph, as it was a step away from all the cute ingenue roles she had been playing and gave her a chance to try a heavy emotional part. In the scene in which she discovers the body of her dead husband, just murdered by a white settler, she raises her arms and then folds them behind her head in a gesture of extreme grief. This remarkable gesture can be compared with the three stages from Warman's book showing how to represent anguish. The main transitions in the various stages of anguish are shown by how high the actress raises her clasped hands. Thus in extreme anguish, the actress raises them high above her head. This seems like a mechanical method of portraying anguish, but it is extremely close to the quite moving gesture of *Ramona*.

Mary Pickford also clasps her hands very much in the same manner when she is happy. In fact, it is one of her most used gestures. However, this does not refute the Delsarte method. Clasped hands can mean either joy or sorrow, and the hands almost seem to act as an emphasis to whatever facial expression is used. John Wesley Hanson indicates this in his book as he



AMONG THE DELSARTE REPERTOIRE ARE THESE GESTURES FOR IGNORING, denying, and rejecting, which were used by Charles Inslee in *The Man and the Woman*. From Edward B. Warman, *Gestures and Attitudes*.

states that certain expressions, such as clenched fists, can indicate numerous emotions depending largely on facial expressions.<sup>17</sup> Hanson's book contains a representation of the emotion joy in which the model clasps her hands very much in the Pickford manner. Hanson's explanation may also be useful in understanding the gesture of Charles Inslee at the end of *The Cord of Life*. In the scene, his son has been saved from death, and Inslee stands over his kneeling wife, who holds their child. He is waving his arms and clenching his fists, and in another context, could be threatening the mother and child. But in this scene, the clenched fists seem to be used for what Hanson calls extreme emphasis.

It is hard to decide whether George Gebhart uses more gestures than the other Biograph actors, or whether he was at the Biograph studios at a period





when the studio relied more on gesture to get the story across. In several instances, his gestures seem similar to those of the Delsarte system. A good example is his work in *The Man and the Woman*. In one scene in this film, a clergyman comes to plead with the roué, played by Gebhart, to protect the young girl whom the young roué has ruined. Among the Delsarte repertoire are several gestures for ignoring and denying, all calling for the actor to make a sharp gesture with his hand and forearm, as if he were brushing away a fly. Gebhart, in dismissing the clergyman, makes very similar gestures.

Another good case in point is Marion Leonard. Miss Leonard could beckon up an amazing intensity of gesture, and she tended to get most of the Lady Macbeth and adulteress roles at Biograph. A good idea of the power she could generate through gesture can be seen





**FOOLS OF FATE.** THIS SERIES OF FRAME ENLARGEMENTS GIVES SOME IDEA of the effectiveness of Marion Leonard in scenes depicting horror or extreme anger. Note the extended hands to express surprise and the hands clutched at the chest to show horror.

in the frame enlargements from *Fools of Fate*. In this scene, Leonard's husband has shot himself, and is lying head down at the table as if asleep. Leonard enters, unaware that her husband is dead until she touches him, and he falls off the chair. Leonard's arm is extended to express surprise. When she finds out that her husband has committed suicide, the gestures of her arms are not dissimilar to the Delsarte gestures for horror and terror. She then crouches in fear and dread, hands clasped to her chest. This last gesture is typical of Leonard's own style, and she uses it often. Another good example of the intensity of her gesture can be seen in the way she uses her arms to summon her lover (Owen Moore) to murder her sleeping husband in *Pippa Passes*.

Indeed, it is possible to find similarities between the gestures of all the actors in the Biograph studios and the Delsarte system, at least during the 1908 period. In retrospect, this is not surprising. If an actor had come directly to the motion picture business from the theater, and if he had to portray and express his emotions without the benefit of spoken dialogue and without standard film devices such as the close-up to help him, he clearly would have had to resort to some system of gesture, and the Delsarte system was certainly the most popular system of gesture in use at the time. Otherwise, it is hard to understand how stage actors could accomplish the very difficult feat of expressing emotion without the use of words and without training in pantomime.

In the early films made at Biograph, there are some truly remarkable examples of gesture used to express emotion. In these scenes, any attempt at naturalism comes to a complete halt. The acting styles become so broad and the conventions of the stage are so enlarged that we seem to be watching silent opera. The temporal distension is complete. We are removed from any realistic time and space. In this unreal continuum, the actor, by gesture alone, expresses his innermost thoughts and feelings. Often these feelings are extremely complex, yet we can read the actor's feelings with very little difficulty, due to our own familiarity with the language system of gesture.

For example, in a scene from *The Tavern-Keeper's Daughter*, Griffith's third film, George Gebhart plays "one of those proletarian half breed Mexicans, whose acidulate countenance was most odious to all."<sup>18</sup> He is trying to assault the daughter of an old trapper and chases her into a miner's cabin. Here, he stumbles across a baby in a crib. As the Biograph bulletin states:

in rushes the infuriated beast in search of his prey. While rummaging the place, he is attracted by the childish prattle of the miner's baby who sits in its cradle playing with her dollie [sic]. His heart is softened by the pure, innocent chatter of the child, and he drops on his knees before the crib and prays to God to help him resist his brutal inclinations.<sup>19</sup>

The result is that for about half the length of a very short film, all action stops while George Gebhart runs through a series of gestures representing various emotions evoked by this child in a crib. After running around the cabin looking for the girl, he suddenly notices the crib. However, his more brutal emotions are



still aroused, and so he makes a dismissing or ignoring gesture very much in the Delsarte manner, turns on his heel, and walks away from the crib. However, he then turns around and returns to the crib. He opens his arms in a tender gesture and gazes at the baby. Then he crouches over the child with his arms still open in the same protective gesture. At this point, he begins to ponder the error of his ways, and in the first gesture expressing remorse, clenches his left arm in a fist while he beats his breast with his right fist. Then, he raises his arms to heaven preparatory to burying his face in his hands in shame. Now Gebhart reaches the climax of the scene as he stretches out his arms and prays to God for help, touches his chest in further remorse, and makes the sign of the cross. Now he lowers his head into his hands and cries. Finally he starts a gesture in which he averts his head away from the child, as if he is so ashamed that he cannot bear to look at it, and starts for the door where he spots the daughter behind the curtain.

The scene is important for several reasons. First, narrative time has been suspended while the actor does his best to externalize his most private emotions, so that we in the audience are in an extremely privileged position vis-à-vis the character. Secondly, the acting has to be considered as formalized. Even if a character went through these emotions, the chances are that he would express them much less broadly than this actor. Thus we are seeing a conscious use of gesture to externalize emotion. Whether one agrees with Dayan or not, the audience is certainly supposed to share the character's most private thoughts. In addition, through gesture alone, the actor has managed to express to the audience a fairly complicated gamut of emotions and a resulting change of heart.

*At the Altar* was released some seven months after *The Tavern-Keeper's Daughter* on February 25, 1909, and Griffith is already moving the camera closer to the actors. But the actors are still portraying emotion by gesture. In this film, Charles Inslee plays Grigo, "a coarse Sicilian" who swears revenge when Minnie, the landlady's daughter with whom he was smitten, plans to marry Guiseppe Cassella, the violinist. The problem for Inslee is to find a visual means to show his grief, anger, and hatred and to make it clear to the audience what he means to do.

We start this sequence with the last moments of the preceding scene. Minnie and Guiseppe have broken the happy news of their incipient betrothal to their in-laws, and they are all hugging in a corner of the frame. Grigo (Inslee) is in the opposite corner, raising his arms in an angry gesture. If nothing else persuades the reader that what is happening on the screen is extremely stylized, this frame enlargement should. Would the family on the left really be so oblivious to Grigo's presence? Even if they were, would Grigo really make a gesture of hatred of this nature in their presence? Both the blocking of the actors and the gesture here perform a psychological function. After Grigo is in his room the scene proper begins. First Grigo looks at the door to the other room and makes angry, threatening gestures. Then he pulls a photograph out of his pocket and looks at it. It is evidently a photograph of Minnie, because he tears it up. Then



COMPARE MARION LEONARD'S GESTURES IN *FOOLS OF FATE* WITH THESE Delsarte gestures for surprise and horror. From John Wesley Hanson, Jr., *The Popular Entertainer*.







**PIPPA PASSES.** IN THIS SCENE, MARION LEONARD BECKONS TO HER LOVER (Owen Moore) to murder her husband (Arthur Johnson), who is asleep on the couch. The intensity of her gesture shows why she got the most intensely emotional parts at Biograph.

he walks into the corner and looks in the mirror and makes more threatening gestures. There is further gesticulation as he walks away towards the table. On the table, there is a small picture or mirror. He seats himself at the table and looks at the picture or mirror and he rubs his eye. Then he lays the object face down and takes a swig from a bottle of wine. He now gets up from the table angrily, and at this point, his off-screen glance suggests that he is beginning to have an idea of how to avenge himself. As his idea ripens, he again approaches the door to the other room and makes gestures to show something of what he is going to do. Here the scene ends.

Another relevant aspect of the scenes from *The Tavern-Keeper's Daughter* and *At the Altar* should be pointed out. Both scenes are linear progressions. The actors do one thing at a time, and then do something

else. Thus, Inslee tears up a picture of Minnie, then he looks in the mirror, then he walks to the table. This acting style makes it difficult for the actor to register two emotions at the same time, or to show conflict. The Griffith characters are generally in the grip of one large emotion at a time. In the scene from *The Tavern-Keeper's Daughter*, George Gebhart may progress from lust to remorse in the course of the scene, but he does so in a series of linear steps. In this style of acting, it would be extremely difficult to show the two emotions in conflict. This may be symptomatic of the seeming inability of Griffith to present a character in whom good and evil elements are mixed. The linearity of the acting style itself also will be carried over into Griffith's analytical editing, a style in which events which take place simultaneously in life are broken down into a linear progression of small shots. Certainly one of the



GEORGE GEBHART PLAYS A MEXICAN WHO IS TRYING TO ASSAULT THE daughter of an old trapper. He chases her into a miner's cabin where he stumbles across a baby in a crib. Here he registers surprise at finding the child.



GEBHART THEN MAKES AN IGNORING OR DISMISSING MOTION AS HE PREPARES TO SEARCH FURTHER FOR THE DAUGHTER.





HE RETURNS TO THE CRIB, ARMS EXTENDED IN A GESTURE OF TENDERNESS



AND THEN CROUCHES DOWN AT THE CRIB.





FIRST HE BEATS HIS BREAST IN REMORSE.



THEN HE RAISES HIS ARMS, AFTER WHICH HE WILL LOWER THEM AND





BURY HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.



THEN HE EXTENDS HIS ARMS IN PRAYER.





GENUFLECTS,



AND FINALLY CRIES.





GEBHART NOW AVERTS HIS HEAD AND COVERS HIS EYES, AS IF HE IS ASHAMED.



WITH HIS HEAD STILL TURNED AWAY, HE STARTS TO RISE.





THEN HE STARTS TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE CRIB, HIS HEAD STILL AVERTED IN SHAME.



AND FINALLY, HE RECOGNIZES THE TRAPPER'S DAUGHTER BEHIND THE SCREEN.





GRIGO (CHARLES INSLEE) RAISES HIS ARMS IN ANGER AT THE HAPPY SCENE AT SCREEN LEFT, THE BETROTHAL OF MINNIE (THE WOMAN HE LOVES) TO ANOTHER.

purposes of the editing style is to make the emotions of the characters clearly readable.

The Biograph actors became extremely expert at portraying emotions through gesture and could carry a very complex scene through the use of gesture alone. In this context, let us note a scene from another early film, *The Call of the Wild*. The scene also uses gesture as pantomime to further the narrative line of the film, but it is effective because the actors portray emotion so well by their gestures.

The film deals with the story of George Redfeather (again Charles Inslee), a young Indian who has gone to Carlisle. He has graduated with high honors, and has returned home to his tribe. At a reception given in his honor, he meets Gladys (Florence Lawrence), the daughter of the Indian agent, Lieutenant Penrose (Harry Salter), immediately falls in love with her, and decides to marry her.

The scene opens with Redfeather deep in thought,

having resolved to ask for Gladys's hand. Gladys enters and greets Redfeather civilly enough. Now Redfeather asks for her hand. Gladys is clearly upset by this, and Redfeather is sensitive enough to feel her distaste. Gladys has assumed a position at screen left where she will remain for the duration of the scene. Inslee makes a series of supplicating gestures, very similar to the Delsarte gestures. Lawrence has cocked her body, suggesting Gladys's unconscious attempt to withdraw from this distasteful scene, which may be equivalent to the Delsartean notion of the concentric state. Inslee clutches his chest with both hands, which in this context means a reference of the actor to himself; "Will you have me?" In the most famous gesture of all Victorian stage gesture, Lawrence tells him to go by pointing to the exit. Gladys's father (Harry Salter) enters, and Gladys tells him what Redfeather has done. Now Inslee assumes a relatively static position at screen right. His gestures also suggest an introverted state at





IN THE NEXT ROOM, GRIGO MAKES FURTHER ANGRY GESTURES.



THEN HE TEARS UP A SNAPSHOT, EVIDENTLY OF MINNIE.





GRIGO THEN LOOKS IN THE MIRROR AND GESTICULATES BEFORE IT

this point. Meanwhile, Salter starts to react. Inslee moves a bit to give Salter center screen. Gladys's father is so angered by Redfeather's presumption that he moves forward to strike him; however, he manages to restrain himself. At this point, Salter accomplishes a virtuosic feat of gesture. He first gestures toward Lawrence and then, in a motion that seems to start from the floor, he makes a stiff-armed gesture toward Inslee that somehow expresses perfectly his contempt for the Indian and his disbelief that this presumptuous savage should ask for the hand of his daughter. Then he starts the wind-up for his gesture telling the Indian to go. Inslee reacts to this humiliation. At this point Salter has concluded his most important moment and walks to screen right to allow Inslee to take center stage. Inslee now starts a series of gestures of supplication which have the dramatic purpose of showing him pressing his hopeless cause. However, Salter again tells him to go, and Inslee begins to register defiance, very much in the Delsarte manner. This defiance quickly becomes anger, and then rage. Finally, in a remarkable gesture, Inslee swears vengeance and exits through the curtain.

The scene is a fine example of bravura gesture used to express a very complicated series of ideas and emotions. I find the amount of information expressed with such speed and economy staggering. However, the problems with this system of acting begin to be apparent. The actors express one thing at a time, and having expressed their emotion, they must stand and wait until it is once again their turn. Thus, after Florence Lawrence tells Inslee to go, she really has nothing to do for the rest of the scene. While Salter has his big scene, Inslee is in the same position, and when it is

Inslee's turn again, Salter has to perform the clumsy maneuver of walking to screen right so that Inslee can once again command the viewer's attention. Clearly, Griffith is presenting himself problems that analytical editing can help solve. If he could cut to a two-shot of Inslee and Salter, he would not have to keep Florence Lawrence standing there. If he could change his camera angle, he would not need to have Salter walk screen right. But analytical editing presents its own problems. A close-up, or a series of shot/counter shots simply record this series of emotions in the same linear fashion that the actors are working through in this scene. There can be as much temporal distension, if not more, in a close-up as in a series of gestures filmed in a long take. Nevertheless, what Griffith was aiming for even in 1908 begins to suggest the solutions he was to find in a few years.

Griffith is coming upon a related problem that gesture alone cannot solve. In *At the Altar*, Inslee has to perform an angry gesture in the same room with his fiancée. Because of the blocking, the scene comes off, but at other times, especially when an actor has to show a presumably private emotion in a room full of characters, the results can be grotesque. For instance, in *The Red Girl*, the villainess must execute some extremely broad posturings in the middle of a crowded bar room to convey the point that she means to do ill to the heroine, while the other patrons have to pretend that they do not notice this demented woman in their midst.

The same problem arises when an actor has to pretend something to the other characters in the film, and yet give the viewer the real truth about the character. For instance, in *Betrayed by a Handprint*, Florence





AND MAKES FURTHER ANGRY GESTURES AS HE WALKS BACK TO THE TABLE.



GRIGO SITS DOWN AND LOOKS AT A SMALL PICTURE OR PHOTOGRAPH





WHICH HE PLACES FACE DOWN ON THE TABLE, AND THEN HE DRINKS FROM A WINE BOTTLE.



HE GETS UP ANGRILY AND BEGINS TO GET AN IDEA OF HOW TO AVENGE HIMSELF.





AT THE END OF THE SCENE, HE AGAIN GESTICULATES ANGRILY TOWARD THE DOOR.

Lawrence plays a young woman who has lost all her money at the gaming table. She is in despair, but she must pretend to the other guests that she is having a wonderful time. As the whole scene is shot in middle distance and in one take, Lawrence must nod and smile at the other guests, and then as they all simultaneously look away and start doing little bits of stage business, she shows her true feelings by falling across the table as though she had been harpooned.

In such a situation, this style of gesture puts an impossible burden on the actor, a problem which analytical editing will partially solve. If Griffith could have shown the smiling face of the actress, and cut away to her anguished, twisting hands as he was to do later in *Intolerance*, he would have found something more effective.

By the middle of 1909, Griffith is no longer stringing together gestures. He seems to have realized that there are other ways to externalize emotion which are more effective cinematically. As early as *The Greaser's Gauntlet* he starts to cut in the middle of a scene to move the camera closer to the actors. In addition, he starts to use a different type of actor and a different type of gesture. An actor like Frank Powell uses much gesture, but it tends to be in a naturalistic style. A good example is his use of gesture in *The Country Doctor*, or his courtship of Marion Leonard in *Fools of Fate*. Powell is obviously not interested in achieving the Grand Manner. The same can be said for an actor like Henry Walthall. There is a moment in *The Convict's Sacrifice* in which Walthall, who is unemployed, looks





CHARLES INSLEE PLAYS GEORGE REDFEATHER, A YOUNG INDIAN WHO HAS GONE TO CARLISLE, GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS, AND RETURNED HOME to his tribe. At a reception given in his honor, he meets Gladys (Florence Lawrence), daughter of the Indian agent (Harry Salter), falls in love with her, and proposes marriage. Here we see a classic gesture of supplication by Inslee.



at his hungry family and clutches the back of his head in angry frustration, a gesture which is worth all the rant in *The Slave*.

Gesture is used in many ways in the Biograph films. It can be used to tell something about the characters. For instance, gesture is always especially florid in the films dealing with Italians or Gypsies. Gesture is also used to advance the story line by pantomime. Two examples of this use can be taken from *The Better Way*. In the first, the mother points to an empty box, signifying that the larder is bare, and that the daughter must marry the elderly suitor so that they can eat. In the second, the elderly husband taps his white head,

showing that he realizes that he is too old for his wife.

As important as these uses are, I believe the use of gesture to express emotion is absolutely central in Griffith's work in this period and crucial to an understanding of his later editing style. Eisenstein remarked that it was significant that a large-scale shot was called a close-up in English, as this label implied a certain relation between the spectator and the screen character. I believe that this interest in externalization of the character's emotions may have as one of its root causes the influence of nineteenth-century theatrical gesture on D. W. Griffith, and consequently on classical cinema.





CHEST CLUTCHING IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS "WILL YOU HAVE ME?"



LAWRENCE, USING A STANDARD GESTURE, TELLS HIM TO GO. SHOCK ON INSLEE'S PART, AS WELL AS FURTHER SUPPLICATION.





THE FATHER ENTERS AND THE DAUGHTER EXPLAINS THE SITUATION IN PANTOMIME. THE FATHER NOW RECEIVES MOST OF THE ATTENTION.



THE FATHER NEARLY STRIKES THE INDIAN IN HIS ANGER.





THE FATHER MANAGES TO RESTRAIN HIMSELF (NOTE HIS CLENCHED FISTS),



GESTURES TO HIS DAUGHTER,





AND BRINGS UP BOTH HANDS AS HE STARTS TO



GESTURE TO THE INDIAN—A PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF HIS OWN CONTEMPT FOR THE INDIAN AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE INDIAN EVER marrying his daughter.





THE FATHER STARTS HIS WIND-UP



AND THROWS OUT HIS ARM TO EXPRESS AS STRONGLY AS POSSIBLE HIS COMMAND THAT THE INDIAN LEAVE.





THE INDIAN STARTS TO REACT TO THIS HUMILIATION.



SALTER, HAVING FINISHED HIS BIG MOMENT, ASSUMES A POSITION AT SCREEN RIGHT, WHILE INSLEE MOVES TO SALTER'S PREVIOUS POSITION AT THE center of the frame.





SUPPLICATION,



SUPPLICATION,





AND FISTS CLENCHED IN A CLASSIC GESTURE OF DEFIANCE BY INSLEE.



INSLEE EXPRESSES PAIN AND RAGE.





FINALLY, INSLEE EXPRESSES ANGER, DEFIANCE, AND HIS DESIRE FOR vengeance. He will exit through the curtain.

#### Notes

1. Garff B. Wilson, *A History of American Acting* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 3.
2. The work of both ladies can still be seen on film. Mrs. Fiske filmed *Becky Sharp*, one of her finest performances on stage, and Mrs. Carter filmed *Du Barry* for Ambrosio in 1914. Their film performances support the standard critical evaluations of their styles.
3. A. Nicholas Vardac, *Stage to Screen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).
4. Stuart C. Chenoweth, "A Study of the Adaptation of Acting Technique from Stage to Film, Radio, and Television Media in the United States, 1900-1951" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1957), p. 128.
5. A. E. Smith, *Two Reels and a Crank* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1952), p. 135. Quoted in Chenoweth, p. 128.
6. G. W. Bitzer, *Billy Bitzer: His Story* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973), p. 63.
7. Daniel Dayan, "The Tutor Code of Classical Cinema," *Film Quarterly* (Fall 1974): 23-31; William Rothman, "Against 'the System of the Suture,'" *Film Quarterly* (Fall 1975): 45-50; Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of Stage-coach," *Film Quarterly* (Winter 1976): 26-38.
8. Rudolf Arnheim, *Film as Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), p. 138.
9. Wilson, *A History of American Acting*, p. 101.
10. Edward Barrett Warman, *Gestures and Attitudes: An Exposition of the Delsarte Philosophy of Expression, Practical and Theoretical* (Boston: Lee and Shepherd, 1892), pp. 24-25.
11. E. M. Booth, *Outlines of the Delsarte System of Expression* (Iowa City, Iowa: E. M. Booth, 1895), p. 9.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
13. Warman, *Gestures and Attitudes*, p. 24.
14. Wilson, *A History of American Acting*, p. 103.
15. Bitzer, *Billy Bitzer: His Story*, p. 63.
16. William C. Young, *Famous Actors and Actresses on the American Stage*, 2 vols. (New York and London: Xerox Company, 1975) 2:889, citing Charlotte Porter, "Boston Discovers Miss Nance O'Neil," *The Critic* (June, 1904): 525-30.
17. John Wesley Hanson, Jr., *The Popular Entertainer and Self-Instructor in Elocution. The Art of Speaking Well and Properly with a Practical Treatise on the Delsarte System of Expression* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1886), p. 24.
18. Eileen Bowser, *Biograph Bulletins* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Inc., 1973), p. 4.
19. *Ibid.*

This article evolved from a paper I wrote at New York University for Jay Leyda's ongoing seminar on D. W. Griffith. I would like to dedicate it to the memory of Jay, who has done so much for film scholarship in this country.

Two former members of the staff were extremely helpful in the writing of this article. Barbara Humphrys, now at the Smithsonian, and Robert Summers, who is now running his own film library, allowed me access to the original paper prints and gave me every assistance within their power. I would also like to thank Pamela Wintle, whose expertise with her camera made the sequences of frame enlargements from the paper prints possible.

The sequences from this paper that were taken from *The Tavern Keeper's Daughter*, *At the Altar*, and *Call of the Wild* were photographed directly from the original paper prints at the Library of Congress. They show the excellent quality of many of the original paper prints, and one can hope that the Library will be able to make good quality copies from them in the foreseeable future. The other frame enlargements are from the Niver Collection, which is in the custody of the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division.

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COOPER C. GRAHAM is a graduate of the Law School of the University of Virginia and received his Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from New York University in 1984. He was the coauthor of *D. W. Griffith and the Biograph Company* (1984), and author of *Leni Riefenstahl and Olympia* (1986), and "Form and Fable: The Influence of German Industrial Art on Fritz Lang's *Nibelungen*," *Performing Arts Annual* (1986). Dr. Graham has recently spent twenty-one months as a reference librarian in the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division.



THIS MONOCHROME IN SEPIA WAS ENLARGED from a photograph of John Thompson Ford taken in 1893, about a year before his death. The artist was Mr. C. Bersch. The portrait was presented to the Lobby Club by Bachrach Brothers on March 14, 1895, to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of their fellow club member. *John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*





# JOHN THOMPSON FORD

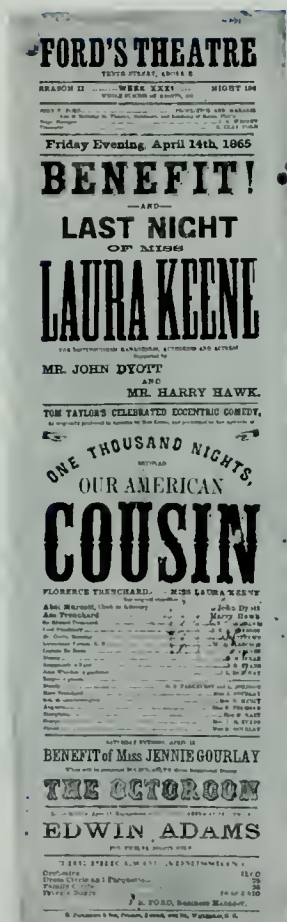
*One positive rule I have . . . is never to permit the Theatre to be played on Sunday. My object in Management is to compel the performance to support the Establishment and I neither admit or permit prostitutes or Bar Rooms, [d]esiring to avoid making an indirect assignation place of my gallery or a Rum Mill of my Lobby, altho from these Sources I could derive from 4 to 5 thousand dollars per annum.*

When he thus wrote to his new stage manager, John Wright, John Thompson Ford was not yet thirty and had been a theatrical manager on his own for only two years. It marked the start of a long and sometimes tumultuous career. Although neither he nor anyone else could have then foreseen that he was to endure tragedies which might have defeated a lesser man, Ford nonetheless endured and for the next three decades he would significantly shape the direction of American theater—and he would do so with unswerving principles of integrity and charity, and with a sense of public duty.

When, in 1987, Ford's grandson, John Ford Sollers, donated a collection of his grandfather's letters, playbills, scripts, scrapbooks, and photographs, the Library of Congress acquired an immensely important resource for the

study of American theater during the nineteenth century. There are, moreover, many documents within the collection which amplify the era of the Lincoln assassination and subsequent events.

The life and career of John Ford falls naturally into three distinct periods—his early life and career during which he built and managed a respectably sized theatrical chain; the period of the mid-1860s when he suffered the unexpected blow to career, coffers, and reputation as a result of the assassination; and from roughly 1870 until the end of his life when he went on to greater theatrical successes and lived to know honor and esteem.



A PLAYBILL FROM FORD'S THEATRE, APRIL 14, 1865. The Library's holdings include one original playbill from the night of the Lincoln assassination, as well as a number of "forgeries" struck after the event. Pictured is a playbill of the "Buckingham type," believed to have been made from the original playbill in the possession of J. E. Buckingham, Sr., Ford's doorkeeper on the night of the assassination. The most readily identifiable clue marking this as a forgery is the imperfect final "E" in the large type "LAURA KEENE." Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

## A CHRONICLE FROM LETTERS

BY GAYLE T. HARRIS





JOHN THOMPSON FORD. THIS PORTRAIT IS FROM THE WASHINGTON, D.C., studio of Matthew Brady. *John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*





Born in Baltimore on April 16, 1829, John Thompson was the second of nine children of Elias and Anna Greanor Ford. A grammar school education in Baltimore provided the basis of a lifelong love of books. In his teens, with his formal education behind him, he was apprenticed to an uncle, a prosperous tobacco merchant in Richmond. The young Ford, however, found little to enrich him in the tobacco business.

In his later life, he would recall that Poe once lectured during that period in Richmond. The young Ford, without the necessary means for admission, had to content himself with standing at the door and simply seeing the poet he so admired.

Perhaps also a little homesick, he gave up the world of tobacco in Richmond and returned to Baltimore in 1851. He there found employment as an agent for the Nightingale Serenaders, a minstrel troupe led by George Kunkel. For the next three years, Ford travelled in advance of the group, making their arrangements and earning a few extra dollars on the side by writing observant dispatches for the *Baltimore Clipper* on the small towns he visited.

Kunkel disbanded the Serenaders in 1854. Then Ford, with Kunkel and Tom Moxley (a popular female impersonator), assumed management of Baltimore's Holliday Street Theatre. Soon thereafter they added the Richmond (Virginia) Theatre, to be followed by theaters in Petersburg, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Ford, at the Holliday Street headquarters, directed the small chain of theaters. He also began to preserve carefully correspondence he received from the famous and yet-to-be famous of the American stage.

Joseph Jefferson, for example, who would later become the personification of Rip Van Winkle to nineteenth-century playgoers, and who was Ford's Richmond stage manager in 1854, wrote to Ford in May of 1856 to arrange for the casting and props for his scheduled appearance at the Holliday Street. Their correspondence, as well as their friendship, continued over the next several decades. Jefferson would, in 1858, play Asa Trenchard in the first American production of *Our American Cousin*.

Laura Keene, who would also appear in another production of the same play in 1865, was another early correspondent of Ford's. In January of 1857, she proposed a new play which would "cost one some thousands to produce." Little could anyone have foreseen that another play which she presented would in actual fact cost Ford some several thousands—and untold anguish—to produce.

A promising young actress who was doing her apprenticeship at the Richmond Theatre wrote to Ford's sister Annie in 1857 that business was good, that the opera had played, "and after that, my favorite Eddy. I envy you when you have him up there." The writer, Mary Devlin, was not yet seventeen, and was still several years away from her blissful but brief marriage to Edwin Booth. Her tragic death in 1863 would end perhaps the only period of happy tranquility in Edwin Booth's life.

Even one of such established reputation as the tragic actor Edwin Forrest frequently took pen in hand to arrange the details of his own performances. At one point, Forrest offers Ford some avuncular advice

# Belvidere Hall!


FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1853.

MOST FAVORABLE

## Last Night,

BUT ONE OF

## Kunkel's Nightingale



# OPERA TROUPE!

## Another Powerful Bill!

First and only night of the laughable burlesque of

# HAMLET.


GO GO SEE IT TO-NIGHT.

GO HEAR

## MASTER ADAMS,

The Wonderful Vocalist.

### THE ENTIRE COMPANY IN THEIR GREAT EFFORTS TO-NIGHT!



## Attraction on Attraction!

PART FIRST.

Instrumental Overture. In Opening Chorus—Hurrah, the day has come, Solo and Chorus—(All) Friends are coming, " " When the Hero's led an' smoking, " " The Grand Procession March, 7th. Dances—Nightingale Party (with variations)	8. Minstrel's Act Nightingale Master Adams & Troupe G. Kunkel P. B. Morgan Harry Lehr
--	--

PART SECOND.

### MISCELLANEOUS OLIO.

BALLAD—"Don't be angry, Mother," Violin Solo, LOUISIANA BELLE DANCE. BY MASTER FLOYD BALLAD—"The Old Sexton," Plantation Dance,	Master Adams & Minstrel GEORGE KUNKEL. H. K. JOHNSON.
--	--

To conclude with the laughable Burlesque of

# HAMLET.

Hamlet, Ghost, Audience,	George Kunkel H. K. Johnson Harry Lehr and W. H. Morgan
--------------------------------	---

The Music of the Nightingales arranged for the Piano, can be purchased at the door, 25 cents a piece.

ADMISSION  
 Hall open at 7 o'clock Performance commences at 8 o'clock

25 CENTS.  
 JOHN T. FORD, Agent.

A PLAYBILL FOR KUNKEL'S NIGHTINGALES, APPEARING IN CUMBERLAND, Maryland, on April 22, 1853. The lower right-hand corner identifies John T. Ford as the agent. *John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*





THE "OLD" FORD'S THEATRE. THE BUILDING WAS GUTTED BY FIRE ON December 30, 1862. The interior was reconstructed and Ford opened his "new" Ford's Theatre on August 27, 1863. *Prints and Photographs Division.*



against lending money to an unnamed, but apparently unreliable person. He concludes with a personal complaint that he is obliged to play St. Louis during the season of 1857–1858, but "I am tired of the theatre, it will be with the greatest reluctance I shall enter it again."

Forrest was, however, back in touch with Ford in 1859, arranging for a six-night engagement, three nights per week, "no more," with the price of admission to be set at a dollar, the upper end of the rate scale





JOHN THOMPSON FORD (AGE 24) AND HIS SON CHARLES E. FORD (AGE 2), Baltimore, 1853. *John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*

an old friend. In a follow-up letter, Booth requested Ford to be sure to put the case “in the hands of a good, *honest* attorney. . . . Poor mother’s income has been eaten up by g-d sharks.”

The success of the Baltimore Theatre gave Ford sufficient financial security to branch out to Washington, D.C.—a city already teeming with war activity, its inhabitants hungry for diversion. He leased a vacated Baptist Church on Tenth Street, N.W., and opened it for musicals on December 10, 1861. In less than a year, the building was closed for renovations and was reopened as the Atheneum.

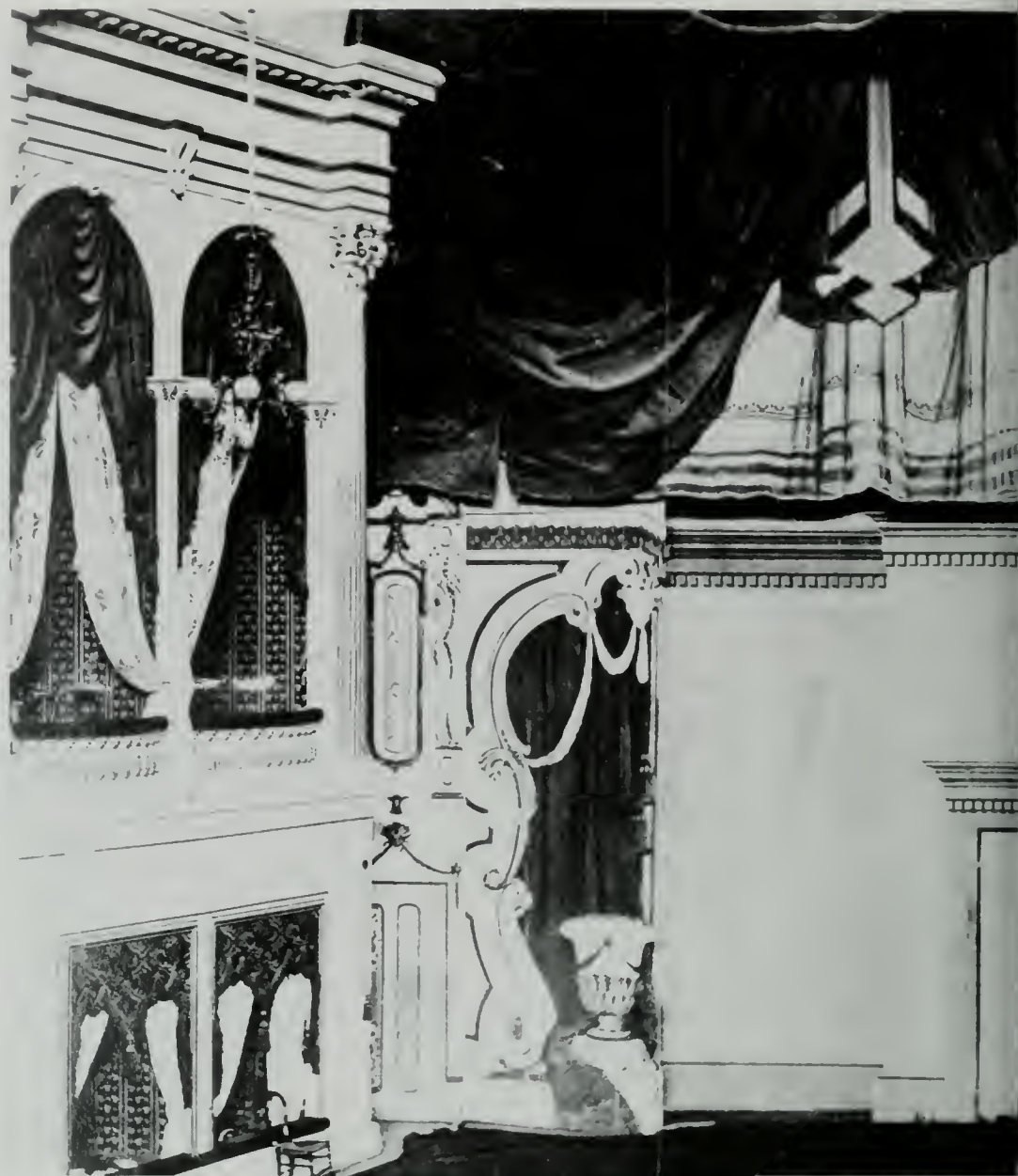
This theater, however, had been in operation for less than a year when, on December 30, 1862, fire—the common scourge of nineteenth-century theaters—completely destroyed it. Undefeated, Ford used the site to rebuild a grand new theater of 900 seats and promptly set about to book the finest talent available. For the first season, which officially opened on August 27, 1863, he booked only the best: Maggie Mitchell, Barney Williams, John Sleeper Clarke, Edwin Booth, J. H. Hackett, Mr. and Mrs. Billy Florence, Gabriel and George Ravel, Edwin Forrest, and Mrs. D. P. Bowers.

as befitted a star of Forrest’s magnitude. He also announces when he plans to arrive in Baltimore and preemptorily directs Ford to “call a rehearsal on Friday morning.”

Ford had known the Booth family in Baltimore for years. When, therefore, Edwin Booth wrote to Ford in 1860 asking him to assist his mother in retrieving \$500, her entire estate, lost in the failure of the banking firm of Josiah Lee & Company, it would have been a service that Ford would have happily performed for



THE FORD'S THEATRE SET AND BOXES AS THEY WERE on the night of President Lincoln's assassination. *Lincoln Collection, Prints and Photographs Division.*



Two months in advance of the scheduled June 27 opening, Ford had been able to secure this galaxy of stars. In reporting this by letter to his stage manager, John Wright, he commented:

Baltimore is in no great danger, it is Phila they are after—and if the Government dont recall McClellan the Southern confederacy bids fair to have the Delaware or the North River for its upper boundary.

On the night Ford opened his new theater, an opening address, written by Thomas S. Donoho, was delivered by J. A. Herne. None could have known how prophetic it would be:

As from the ashes Cinderella rose,  
Rise we, all radiant from our night of woes,  
That starry night, which, suddenly, became  
Black with vast clouds and terrible with flame;  
And you, dear Friends, and we who tread the  
boards,  
Gave one long sigh, and said: "Farewell to Ford's!"

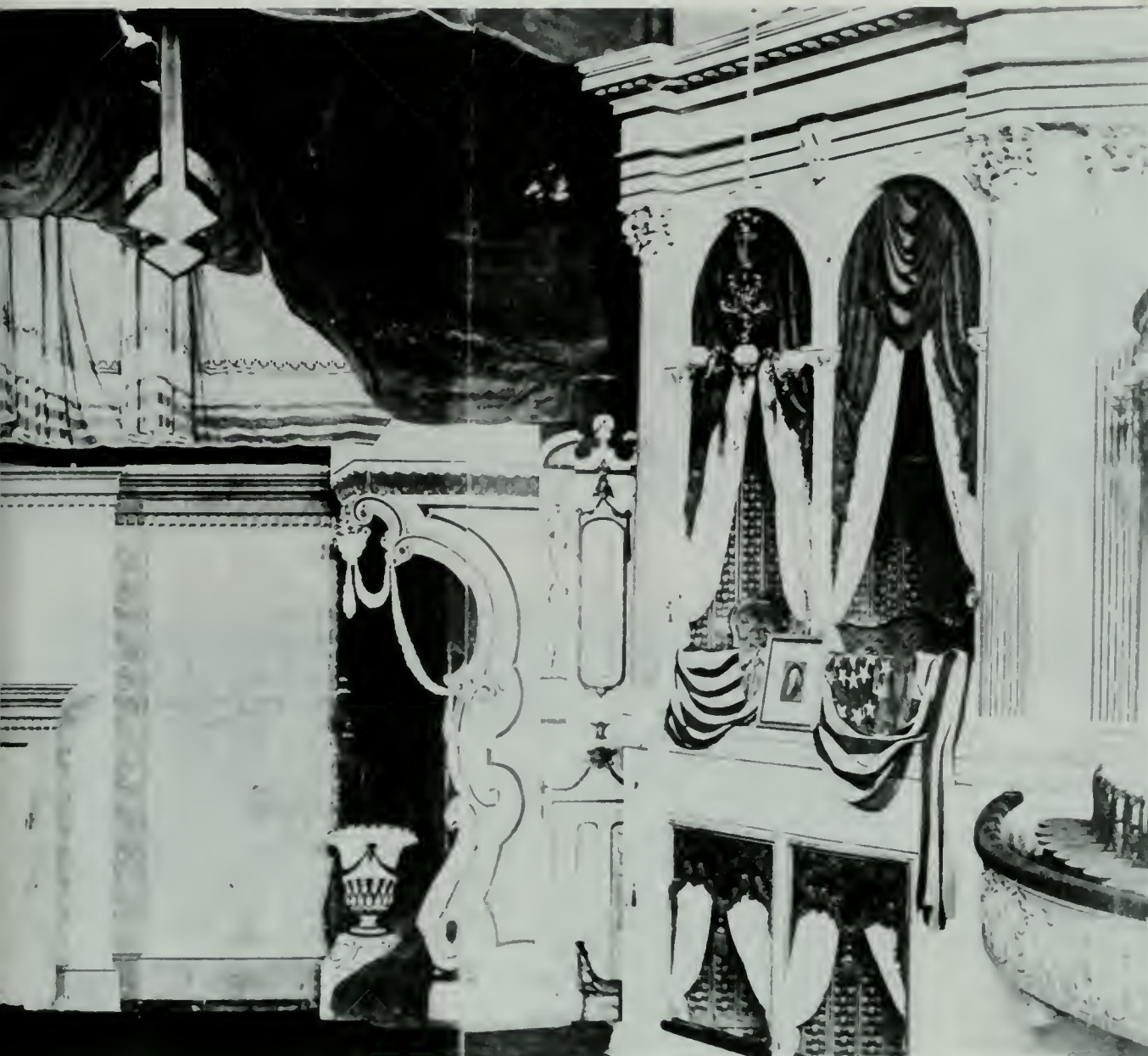
"Farewell to Ford's"—and welcome Ford's again:  
A nobler Palace for the Muses' reign!

May Beauty's smile, and Man's approval, grace,  
And happier fortune crown, our brave new place!  
...

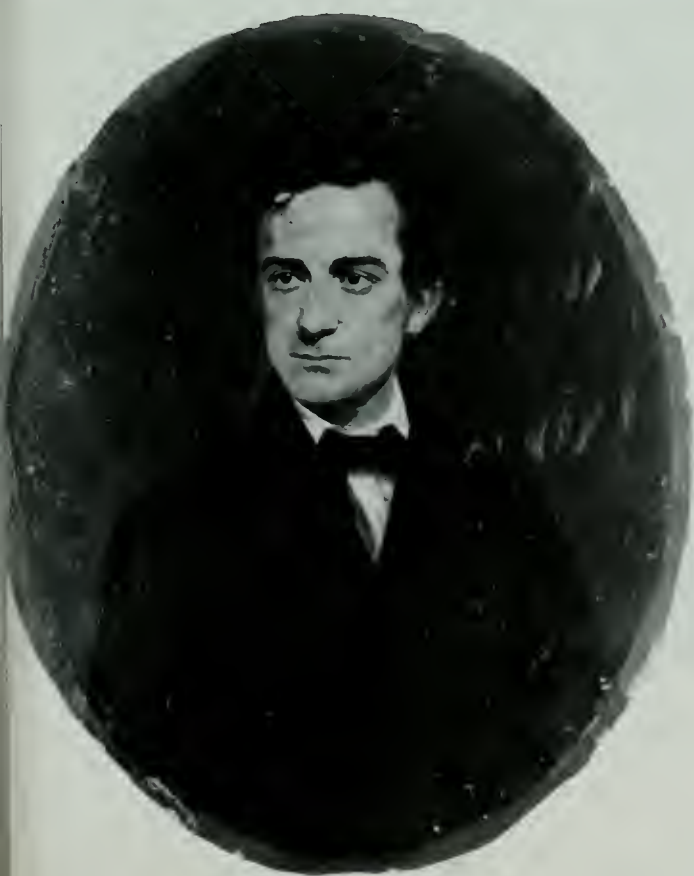
What though the old-time Theatre was small,  
And long-wick candles dozed on stage and wall—  
Those sombre meteors, duly snuffed, between  
The falling curtain and the opening scene;  
What though the rival pit and gallery strove,  
As once the gods with "cloud-compelling Jove:"  
Yet, on that dim stage, Falstaff-Warren strode  
Called for his sack, and, bullying, "took the road;"  
Here, Jefferson, the genial, good old man,  
Raised mirth so high that all to tears it ran;  
Here, Booth, swift-darting from his haunted tent,  
His soul's mad terror to our own souls sent. . . .

The first season of the new theater, although somewhat of a financial drain as Ford attempted to establish a showcase, was reasonably successful. As he went about booking the second season, that of 1864–1865, he evidently wrote to Edwin Forrest to inquire about the abilities of a certain stock player before engaging him. Forrest, on August 8, 1864, replied that the young man was of good habits and education, and





ACTOR EDWIN BOOTH, AN UNATTRIBUTED PAINTING, CIRCA 1860.  
*John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*



could safely be engaged. Forrest then made an intriguing proposal: "How would it do to nominate Robt E Lee, for the next President. I think he would beat Lincoln take the votes North and South."

Ford also saved a letter dated September 17, 1864, from the spectacularly handsome, dashing, and popular John Wilkes Booth who agreed to a two-week booking in Washington to begin on the following November 2. Booth thought that two weeks in Baltimore might then be possible, "or you may want to keep me on in Washington."

On April 2, 1865, Ford wrote to John Wright to report that he had suggested to Laura Keane that her upcoming engagement include *The Workmen* [of *Washington*; or, *The Curse of Drink*], *The Rivals*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*.

On Palm Sunday, the grim and grisly drama which had consumed the nation for the previous five years came to an end at Appomattox Court House. Cessa-





A BOOTH FAMILY ALBUM. MRS. JUNIUS BRUTUS Booth, Sr., and her children: Junius Brutus, Jr., Rosalie, Edwin, Asia Sidney, Joseph, and John Wilkes. *John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*

EDWARD SPANGLER (1825–1875) WAS THE FORD'S Theatre stagehand implicated in the plot to assassinate President Lincoln. He escaped the gallows but served a sentence of three and a half years of hard labor. Thomas Ewing, Jr., his defense attorney, was paid by Ford. *Prints and Photographs Division.*







tion of hostilities triggered in Washington a week of joyous celebration with band concerts, fireworks, and parades. With the Laura Keene company on the boards at Washington, and the management of the theater there in the capable hands of his two brothers, Harry Clay and James, Ford saw the opportunity to go to Richmond to bring his mother-in-law and possibly other relatives who had survived the war behind Confederate lines back to the safety of Baltimore. Richmond, torched on April 3 by the departing Confederate Government, was now under Federal control.

In the middle of the week before his departure, a letter from C. G. Thompson in Richmond provided a taste of what he could expect: "this place for the last 4 years has been a perfect Hell—no liberty no speech."

On Good Friday, Ford, in Baltimore, received from the War Department in Washington a pass permitting him to travel to Richmond—via steamboat from Fortress Monroe to City Point, Virginia. Once there, he was to report to the Provost Marshall at Richmond to announce his arrival.

As his travel pass was to expire on April 20, he did not delay in setting off on his mission to Richmond immediately on Friday, to arrive on Friday evening. The Washington theater, in the meantime, was in the capable hands of his two younger brothers who carried out the usual preparations for the evening's performance. At about 11:30 A.M., as he later testified, Harry Clay Ford was told by his brother James that President Lincoln had booked a box for the evening's performance.

Because the presidential party was to have included General Grant as well as the Lincolns, Harry Ford quickly arranged to have a partition removed between two boxes to allow for more room. The task was performed by one of the regularly employed scene shifters, Edward Spangler. Harry then arranged two U.S. flags on stands, and draped two flags over the front balustrades. Between the flags, he placed a picture of George Washington which had never before been used in the theater and added a flag borrowed from the Treasury regiment to honor General Grant. He then arranged furniture—a chair from the stage, a few other chairs from the reception room, and a rocking chair

brought from his own bedroom.

On the bill for the night was the tried and true comedy by Tom Taylor, *Our American Cousin*, starring Laura Keene and her company. It was to be Laura Keene's benefit before her engagement the following week in Cincinnati.

During the afternoon, both James and Harry Ford busied themselves with the normal activities of theatrical management, only noting that James had written special notices for the afternoon editions of the *Star* and the *National Republican*.

The run of playbills being prepared by Polkinhorn, printer to the theater, was halted long enough to insert the lyrics to "Honor to Our Soldiers," a patriotic musical tribute written by the leader of the orchestra in honor of the president's visit.

The Lincoln party arrived at the theater at approximately 8:30 P.M., after the curtain had already been raised. As William Withers, the orchestra leader, caught sight of the president entering through the back of the balcony, he interrupted the performance to lead the orchestra through "Hail to the Chief." The house as a body rose to give the president a standing ovation as he proceeded to the prepared box.

Meanwhile, another arrival was taking place at the rear of the theater—a lone figure on a rented horse. The rider, well-known to most of the Ford's stage crew, apparently gave no cause for concern to those he met as he entered the theater and wandered about the back of the house.

The actor, Harry Hawk, in the character of Asa Trenchard, was alone on the stage as he spoke the sure-fire laugh-getting line, "Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old gal, you sockdologizing old man-trap," when the report of a gunshot rang out. Moments later, the assassin Booth leaped from the box, breaking the shin bone of his right leg as he landed, and hopped on one foot through the rear door of the stage. Pandemonium swept the theater. Withers, the orchestra leader, attempted to stop Booth but was stabbed as the assassin made his escape.

The president was taken to a house across the street from the theater, but died from the gunshot wound to the head.



John Ford, meanwhile, awoke in Richmond the following morning and, in utter ignorance of the previous night's events, penned a letter to his mother-in-law, of whose precise whereabouts he was apparently uncertain. He reported that he had come to Richmond to see her, having left his wife and six children all well in Baltimore. He enclosed twenty dollars for her as well as an envelope which she was to use to deposit her letter in the Richmond Post Office, adding, "Let me hear from you soon." As an afterthought, he added, "Today is Saturday [daughter] Annie's birth day fifteen years old tomorrow I am 36."

Whether Ford ever mailed this letter is uncertain. He did, however, return immediately to Baltimore by boat, and then proceeded to Washington.

On Sunday, his Washington theater was seized by order of the Secretary of War and his brother Harry was arrested and imprisoned. Apparently, Ford had no inkling that his own freedom of movement was in jeopardy, for on Sunday from Washington he wrote to Charles Getz, his scenic designer at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore, asking him to take care of the details of the production of *Naiad Queen* there. Ford was staying in Washington to attempt to have two of his actor friends released from the Old Capitol Prison. He then planned to meet Getz in Philadelphia by two o'clock on the following Tuesday. (He would later learn that a telegram from the War Department in Washington demanding he surrender himself was slowly making its way from Washington to Richmond, where it would be forwarded to Baltimore, and thence back to Washington.)

By 10 P.M. on the Tuesday, however, Ford found himself unceremoniously—and without any charges having been lodged against him—tossed into an upper garret room of Carroll Prison. On the following day, he was given pencil and paper with which he wrote to Thomas Hall at the Holliday Street to report his predicament. He was anxious about family and the business—"The one I must leave to Providence and the other to you." He asked Hall to see his friend and attorney, Henry Winter Davis, as well as Reverdy Johnson—adding:

I only ask some kind of a hearing. I have been unfortunate enough any way and it is peculiarly hard I should suffer for the hellish deviltry of an assassin who plunged the nation in woe and ruined me in a business sense as well as wronged me as a citizen,

He asked also that the Governor-Elect of Maryland be contacted in his behalf, offering his bond of \$500,000 which "kind friends" had proffered.

To this letter the prison superintendent affixed a note:

Mr. Ford. Sir—You should not mention names of other persons whom you wish the influence of. You should confine yourself to your own family affairs strictly. No allusion to Public persons or matters.

At 4:30 P.M. on that afternoon, Ford's brother James was arrested and confined to the same prison.

During the next several weeks, a flurry of letters from Thomas Hall in Baltimore to Ford in the Wash-

ington prison gives a sense of the intense activity and the number of persons involved in attempting to secure his release.

On May 11, Ford addressed to the Secretary of War a Petition for a Hearing, on behalf of himself and his two imprisoned brothers. Ford later wrote:

I wrote this letter on the floor—I had neither chair nor table in my room. The letter was delivered at the War Department, and is probably there yet, in the archives. I received no reply to it.

Forty days later, on May 27, again without explanation or hearing, Ford was released from Carroll Prison. On May 31, he testified before the Military Commission convened to try the accused conspirators in defense of the accused Edward Spangler, the scene shifter in his employ. Testimony was taken from Harry Clay Ford and James Ford on the same day; the two brothers, however, were not released from Carroll Prison until June 3.

On June 29 and 30, the Military Commission met in secret and rendered guilty verdicts upon David Herold, George Atzerodt, Lewis Payne, and Mrs. Mary E. Surratt. On July 5, Pres. Andrew Johnson confirmed the sentence recommended for all—that they be hanged. The sentences were to be carried out, under the direction of Secretary of War Edward Stanton, between 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. on July 7.

Three who were originally charged—Samuel Arnold, Dr. Samuel Mudd, and Edward Spangler—escaped the noose, although they were sentenced to hard labor. The common denominator amongst them was their defense attorney, Gen. Thomas Ewing, Jr.

On the evening of the execution, General Ewing wrote to his father. At the request of Reverdy Johnson, he had that morning prepared petitions to save Mrs. Surratt from the gallows, and Judge Wylie issued the writ of habeas corpus at 10:30 A.M. At noon, General Hancock and Attorney-General Speed returned the writ without the president's endorsement. Judge Wylie had "feebly" said that he was unable to execute orders against the president's orders and Mrs. Surratt went to the gallows—"declaring her innocence to the last."

The younger Ewing expected that he would be going to New York to apply for writs of habeas corpus for his three clients. For this service, Mudd's friends were prepared to pay \$1,000 and \$1,500 contingent, and, for Spangler, the scene shifter, John Ford was to pay \$500 more, and perhaps \$1,000 more in case of success. Ewing concluded: "They say Spangler was delighted at escaping hanging. He sent a special request to Ford today to send him to the prison his large testament and his small dog!"

On the day the condemned four were to be hung, John Ford's activities were of a somewhat different nature. As he later wrote for the *North American Review* of April 1889:

The memories of my contact with [the] witnesses, without whose testimony there was no shadow of a case against Mrs. Surratt, made the announcement of her conviction, and the intended swift and terrible execution of her sentence on the following day, a fearful horror. I deemed it a duty to devote every mo-





GENERAL THOMAS EWING, JR. (1829–1896), was the defense attorney for accused conspirators Samuel Arnold, Edward Spangler, and Dr. Samuel Mudd, all of whom escaped the gallows. *Prints and Photographs Division.*



ment, up to the time she was doomed to die, to an effort to have her sentence commuted. I felt it was a criminal weakness, without justification or precedent in this country and age, to rush her to the scaffold and strangle her in haste upon questionable evidence, by a Commission whose legality had been denied by the leading jurists of the country. I did not sleep during the night of July 6, devoting most of it to writing earnestly to the President. I left my home in Baltimore at 3 A.M. on the 7th and reached Washington by rail about 6 A.M. I sought the residence of the Hon. Montgomery Blair, and found that he was asleep; I sent him the letter for the President, which implored the commutation or suspension of the terrible sentence of death against Mrs. Surratt until he could hear me, and urged that a few days would suffice to establish the truth. . . . I found personal access to those in authority barred and guarded in every way at the



The memories of my contact with these witnesses, without whose testimony there was no shadow of a case against Mrs. Surratt, made the announcement of her conviction, and the intended swift and terrible execution of her sentence, <sup>on the following day,</sup> a fearful horror. I deemed it a duty to devote every moment up to the ~~last~~ <sup>time</sup> she ~~had~~ <sup>was to die</sup> to an effort to have her sentence commuted. I felt it was a criminal weakness without justification or precedent in this country and age to push her to the scaffold and strangle her in haste upon <sup>questionable</sup> ~~unimpeached~~ evidence, ~~and that~~, before a ~~court~~ <sup>commission</sup> whose legality had been denied by the leading jurists of the country. I did not sleep during the night of July 6th, devoting most of it to writing earnestly to the President. I left my home in Baltimore at 3 A.M. on the 7th, and reached Washington by rail about 6 A.M. I sought the residence of the Hon. Montgomery Blair and found he was asleep. I sent him the letter for the President which implored the commutation or pardon of the terrible sentence of death.



White House; a hearing refused to the daughter of the condemned woman; the writ of habeas corpus denied; and Mrs. Surratt a dangling corpse before I turned homeward.

In the meantime, Ford had, with the apparently tacit approval of the Secretary of War, developed a plan to sell the theater to the Young Men's Christian Association. According to a report in the *Sunday Morning Chronicle* (June 11, 1865, p. 2), it was intended that the structure be maintained in its current state as a "memorial edifice" to the late president. Plans called for lectures and concerts to be held, and the adjoining house to be used for a library of standard and religious books.

The proposal, however, failed and Ford announced instead his intention to resume business as usual. Reopening was scheduled for Monday, July 10, with a performance of *The Octoroon*. The announcement produced a wrathful response. Ford kept one note dated July 9 and reading: "You must not think of reopening tomorrow night—it will not be tolerated. /s/ Anonymous."

On Saturday, attorney Thomas Ewing wrote that Spangler had reported that he overheard some soldiers at the prison predicting a riot if Ford reopened. Ewing warned: "You had better get a special guard from Gen. Hancock, or other military authority. Do not neglect this precaution on your *first* night. I understand *soldiers* well enough to believe it not unlikely they would attempt to break up the performance, & even destroy the building, or gut it; and *authorities* well enough to believe they might wink at it."

At the last moment, the Secretary of War, acting, by his own assertion, under orders from Pres. Andrew Johnson, had the theater seized in the name of the U.S. Government. Less than a month later, on August 5, Ford signed an "agreement" with J. H. Crowell, Adjutant Quartermaster, to turn the theater and its land over to the U.S. Government for payment of \$100,000, pending Congressional approval.

As Ford later told the story to a reporter from the *New York Daily Graphic* (April 7, 1879), Stanton originally had no intention of purchasing the theater,

but I had a good lawyer in Henry Winter Davis, who belonged to the Republican Party. . . . He was a great radical, but no friend of military trials. Davis went up with me to see Stanton, and it was an interesting scene. Violent as Stanton was, he was no match for Davis, who was brave as a lion and could talk just as well as Stanton. It only took a few moments to bring Stanton to terms, and he bought my theatre for \$100,000. . . . I don't suppose the whole property today would bring \$30,000; but at the time Stanton bought it, it would have brought more.

Ford, undoubtedly with a sense of relief, left the Washington theatrical scene for the time being, and



EDWIN M. STANTON (1814–1869), SECRETARY OF WAR IN LINCOLN'S Cabinet. Ford suffered at his hand, but—through the efforts of Ford's attorney, Henry Winter Davis—was ultimately paid for his pains. Prints and Photographs Division.

returned to the stability of his theatrical business in Baltimore. In the meantime, there were still a few nagging matters connected with the assassination to be dealt with before he could get on to other concerns.

He had promised and still owed Thomas Ewing legal fees for the defense of his stagehand, Edward Spangler. It was most likely Ford's sense of personal responsibility which prompted him, on November 20, to send a partial payment. Ford explained that he had not yet sufficiently recuperated to be "flush," but it would not be long until more could be spared, adding, "I had no idea how much harm our friend at the War Office had done me—but the skies are bright and business good despite former adverse fortunes and with the year I trust to end all my financial troubles at least."

In ending the letter, he added that he would need to tell Ewing about a lady from his company who saw Spangler on the fateful night. "[H]er evidence would have been and may yet be of importance." Both the lady and her evidence must remain tantalizing mysteries.

Ford again wrote to Ewing in January of 1866 to report that final payment would be forthcoming "[i]n a few more days, (I mean days as Lawyers mean words



when they say 'one word more')." He explained that he was awaiting final settlement from the government before being able to settle up with Ewing.

He then went on to report that he had had word from a returned prisoner that Spangler was doing well, although he was compelled to wear irons. Dr. Mudd, however, looked very badly—"his hair is nearly all out and he is really half crazy. With Arnold he is compelled by a Negro guard to sweep the Sally ports continually. I believe that is the name—"

Ford's charity toward Spangler, however, continued beyond payment of his legal fees. On April 6, 1866, Ford wrote to Reverdy Johnson requesting his counsel to free Spangler from the six-year sentence of hard labor to which he had been sentenced and which he was serving at Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas, Florida. As Ford wrote, "Spangler was acquitted upon all the charges save one . . . He is wholly innocent. As soon as you think the time propitious I wish you to move in the matter."

On March 1, 1869, after serving three years and six months of his sentence, Spangler was pardoned by Pres. Andrew Johnson as a result of the efforts of Ford and Johnson. He lived the remaining six years of his life with and under the care of Dr. Mudd in southern Maryland.

But back in Baltimore, skies did indeed seem brighter for Ford—both personally and professionally. To his Holliday Street Theatre, he added the Baltimore Front Street Theatre, and managed both simultaneously between 1866 and 1869.

The Ford family expanded as well. To the six children of John and Edith Andrews Ford who had been born by 1865 (Charles, Annie, George, Frances, Elizabeth, and John), from 1866 were added eight more: May, Lucy, Martha, Harry, Saile, Alexander, Washington, and William. Letters written home to several of the daughters when he was later on tour offer ample evidence that Ford revelled in his role as loving paterfamilias.

He also ventured into the political arena during this period. As a candidate for mayor of Baltimore in 1867, he was unsuccessful, losing to Robert T. Banks by a narrow margin. In 1870, however, he was elected to the Baltimore City Council and held the position for a number of years. As a member of the council, he was active in promoting the improvement of streets and the laying of car tracks, the acquisition of city parks and public squares, establishing the police and fire alarm system, and creating a city water supply; and for many years served on the board of the State Penitentiary System.

In February of 1869, John Ford performed a kindness for the Booth family which suggested that he bore no animosity to remaining members of the family—regardless of the anger he may have carried for John Wilkes.

The body of John Wilkes Booth had been, for the previous two years, in a shallow grave under a floor of a storehouse at the Washington arsenal—along with those of the hanged conspirators and Andersonville's Captain Wirz. Repeated requests from Edwin Booth to have the body returned to the family were at last honored by President Johnson. The body was then exhumed and brought to the undertaking rooms of

Harvey and Marr on F Street, near Tenth Street in Washington. For the family, the younger brother Joseph, the sister Rosalie, and Mrs. Mary Ann Booth were present to identify the body. They brought with them to witness and to identify the body John Ford, who expressed himself entirely satisfied that the body in the casket was that of John Wilkes Booth. Burial in an unmarked grave in Baltimore's Greenmount Cemetery quickly followed.

Ford's friendship with and devotion to the Booth family, most notably with Edwin Booth, continued despite their shared tragedy. In July of 1867, Ford had written to Booth, to seek his approval of an action Ford proposed to take, probably in connection with the retrieval of the body of John Wilkes Booth. Booth replied:

Do what you can—whatever you think can be done—I shall not forget it. Any reference to this fearful subject serves to open all my wounds afresh—and God knows the shame & horror heaped upon my family is enough already. Were it not for my child I think it would have crushed me long since—as it is I feel more keenly than the world can know the terrible weight upon me.

The friendship between Ford and Booth continued into the next decade. Booth's letters during this period are clearly written to Ford not only as a trusted professional colleague, but as a faithful friend.

In January of 1874, Booth had been forced by the panic of creditors to close his theater in New York and to file for bankruptcy. He then took to the road.

On April 16, he wrote from Cincinnati to let Ford know that he would not be able to appear on the following Monday night, "altho my general health is good enough—the 'wear and tear' of brain & the nervous system is too apparent, & I *must* in all justice to myself & all concerned with me, relax a little now & then. . . . God knows I need the money now—every dollar I can get—as much as you, and yet I am too painfully aware that rest is of far more value." Booth then asked Ford to secure rooms in only the best hotel, adding that he and his wife had been accustomed to having parlor and bedroom with bath attachments for \$16 per day in most places.

By 1875, Booth was planning a southern tour, under the management of Ford. In response to Ford's proposed terms and itinerary, Booth wrote from Cos Cob on April 20, 1875. In essence, he accepted Ford's offer of \$30,000 for fifty performances, but, in the itinerary, he counted fifty-two performances—with train travel during "ungodly" hours. He asked Ford to recheck the schedules, or, perhaps to secure a special train. He noted that he had refused the offers of a number of other prospective managers,

but "mark me, Master Ford," as you jerk me from "hither to yon" o'er rough roads, from sunrise till he set again, and look for me to play that night—ye will not find me; I cannot, must not, will not do it!

Evidently, Ford was able to allay Booth's fears in this regard and also asked for Booth's preferences as to cast. On May 6, 1875, Booth replied that it would be best if Ford's stage manager cast such plays as could be done





ACTOR EDWIN FORREST (1806–1872), AMERICAN TRAGEDIAN AND respected personal and professional friend of John Ford's. *John Thompson Ford Collection, Manuscript Division.*





ACTOR JOSEPH JEFFERSON III (1829–1905) WAS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS representation of Rip Van Winkle, which he played for more than thirty years. His friendship with Ford dated from about 1856, and the two were frequent correspondents. *Prints and Photographs Division.*

with the “usual doubles for a small company,” probably a cast of eight men and three women. Further:

I would suggest for both our sakes, a company of *live* people; reliable & *ambitious*, who can dress well, look

clean & tidy, who read intelligently & and are willing to do their “derndest”. Thus equipped we need not rely on numbers (except in front).

The tour, which began during January of 1876, was a success for both star and manager, perhaps due as much to the inevitable curiosity of seeing the assassin’s brother as to Booth’s own ability.

Two years later, during an interview, Ford made an offhand remark to the effect that he considered John Wilkes Booth insane at the time of the assassination. Edwin Booth took great exception, and coldly ended his relationship with Ford.

In the meantime, Ford’s theatrical enterprises had



expanded. In addition to Baltimore's Holliday Street Theatre which he held from 1855 through 1878, and the Front Street Theatre (1866 through 1869), he added Ford's Grand Opera House in 1871. He held this property until his death in 1894.

In Philadelphia, he owned and managed the Broad Street Theatre between 1878 and 1880; and in New York he managed the Fifth Avenue Theatre for the seasons of 1878–1880. In 1873, he built Ford's Opera House at the corner of Ninth Street and Louisiana Avenue and held this property for twelve years. Simultaneously, between 1875 and 1878, he managed Washington's National Theatre.

In 1879, in the interview given to the *Daily Graphic* (April 7, 1879), Ford compared the theater public in the several cities in which he did business. Stating that he doubted he had made any money in Baltimore for the past twenty years, he continued:

In Baltimore pleasures of the table and of society indoors discount the theatre. There is not so much appreciation of acting and singing in Baltimore now as there was thirty years ago. I attribute a part of this decline to the Peabody Investment. The late George Peabody . . . left about \$500,000 to endow an institute associated with which are concerts. Those concerts have come to be matters of enjoyment instead of education, and the young people go there to look at each other and be seen. The endowment has injured theatrical performances and been of very little good to the city.

On Richmond and the South: "Since the war indifference and stagnation have settled on the public amusements. . . . There is not a place in the South which affords a reliable support to a manager. The whole theatrical business down there is now controlled by combinations of travelling companies, which start out from New York and other Eastern cities and play a night or a week in a place and then rush on."

In Philadelphia, "there is here a latent enthusiasm which can be brought forth by seeking for it. There is money in Philadelphia which will be spent if you give it encouragement."

Washington, however,

is much in need of new blood. Northern clerks and employees to the number of about 20,000 fill up the Executive departments there. They are thrifty, saving people. No matter how small the amount they make they put at least half of it by and send it home to make an investment with it. A dollar to most of them looks as large as the side of a house. I have had to lease two theatres in Washington to get any control of the business. They like something costly at the Capital, but an opera company costs so much that a manager has no margin.

In October of 1882, a benefit in his honor marked Ford's thirty years of theatrical management in Baltimore. Although initially instigated by several of his theatrical protégés as thanks for his unstinting help and support, he was feted from many corners of Baltimore for his unstinting kindness, charity, and support of causes for the good. A similar celebration followed in Washington.

Among the testimonial letters connected with the celebration and which Ford preserved was one received from the Headquarters of the Army of the United States:

My Dear Sir—I am informed that Monday next in this City, your friends will give you a grand benefit in honor of and in commemoration of the beginning of your career as a manager. . . . I have noticed with special pleasure and my experience of the stage from outside antedates your thirty years, that you have discovered, nursed and encouraged many of the actors and actresses who now adorn the stage of America—and I am sure many of them will bear willing testimony to your encouragement of them in the days of their youth & trial.

To me, the stage is not only a powerful instructor but the very best kind of rest in the midst of the cares of life. I have always been, am now, and propose to be a great friend of the drama—a friend to those who play on the stage and a friend to the managers who bear the burden of preparation and management. . . . I am with real respect.

/s/ W. T. Sherman

During the last decade of his life, Ford gradually withdrew from active theatrical management, retaining only the Grand Opera House in Baltimore. Charitable works, however, continued, notably by his organization of annual programs of free summer excursions for the aged and for the poor children of Baltimore.

Increasingly more time was spent with his family at the manse on North Gilmore Street. The *Baltimore American* of March 25, 1894, published a partial inventory of the furnishings of the house. Included were the picture of George Washington used on the presidential box at Ford's Theatre on the night of the assassination, chairs from the House of Representatives which had been occupied by Henry Winter Davis and S. S. Cox, a stage desk used by Edwin Forrest and Edwin Booth, and an extensive collection of rare books and documents.

An autograph portfolio contained the signatures of Charles Dickens, Pres. Millard Fillmore, John Wilkes Booth, Wilkie Collins, William Warren, W. C. Macready, Charlotte Cushman, Adelaide Neilsen, Edwin Adams, Barry Sullivan, Adelina Patti, Charles Kean, Horace Greeley, Ole Bull, Madame Celeste, Joaquin Miller, Samuel Clemens, and Lillie Langtry.

In January of 1894, Ford became ill with "the grip," which for a time caused the family some concern. He did, however, seem to be well along toward recovery when, on March 14, with no apparent warning, he suffered a relapse and died.

He was, at the time of his death, in the midst of planning a celebration of Shakespearean works with a tour to star his daughter, Martha, and Creston Clarke—the nephew of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth.

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Gayle T. Harris, one score and six years with the Library of Congress, has served with the Congressional Research Service and the Copyright Office in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and the Planning Office. She has in progress a biography of Kate Bateman, a nineteenth-century actress from Baltimore, as well as a calendar index of the John Thompson Ford Collection.



**FOREPAUGH & SELLS BROTHERS** GR  
CO

# MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

**NEW YORK.**

**THE WORLD FAMOUS  
METROPOLITAN HOME  
OF THESE COMBINED  
STUPENDOUS SHOWS.**

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**BY MARGARET M. MALISZEWSKI**



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# HISTORIC AMERICAN THEATERS

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THEATER IS MORE THAN THE STAGE, the auditorium, and their component parts, theater historian Joseph Urban said in 1929. "It is a place in which to experience a heightened sense of life. Two factors interact to establish this vivid sensation—the place and the performance."<sup>1</sup>

This statement reflects the appreciation Americans had by that time developed for theater as a legitimate art form and as a building type. However, the history of theater in America is a difficult one. The road to acceptance was full of hardships, disapproval, and adaptation.

FROM THE COLONIES TO THE OLD WEST



In 1665, for example, when colonists were still struggling to establish themselves firmly on the east coast of North America, records reveal a trial in which a certain William Darby and two accomplices stood accused in the colony of Virginia of presenting the play, *Ye Bare and Ye Cubb*.<sup>2</sup>

The prevalent Puritan attitudes toward theater at this time can also be discovered in contemporary correspondence, as in the following excerpt from a letter from John Murray, a strict Puritan, to William Dunlop, a supporter of theater:

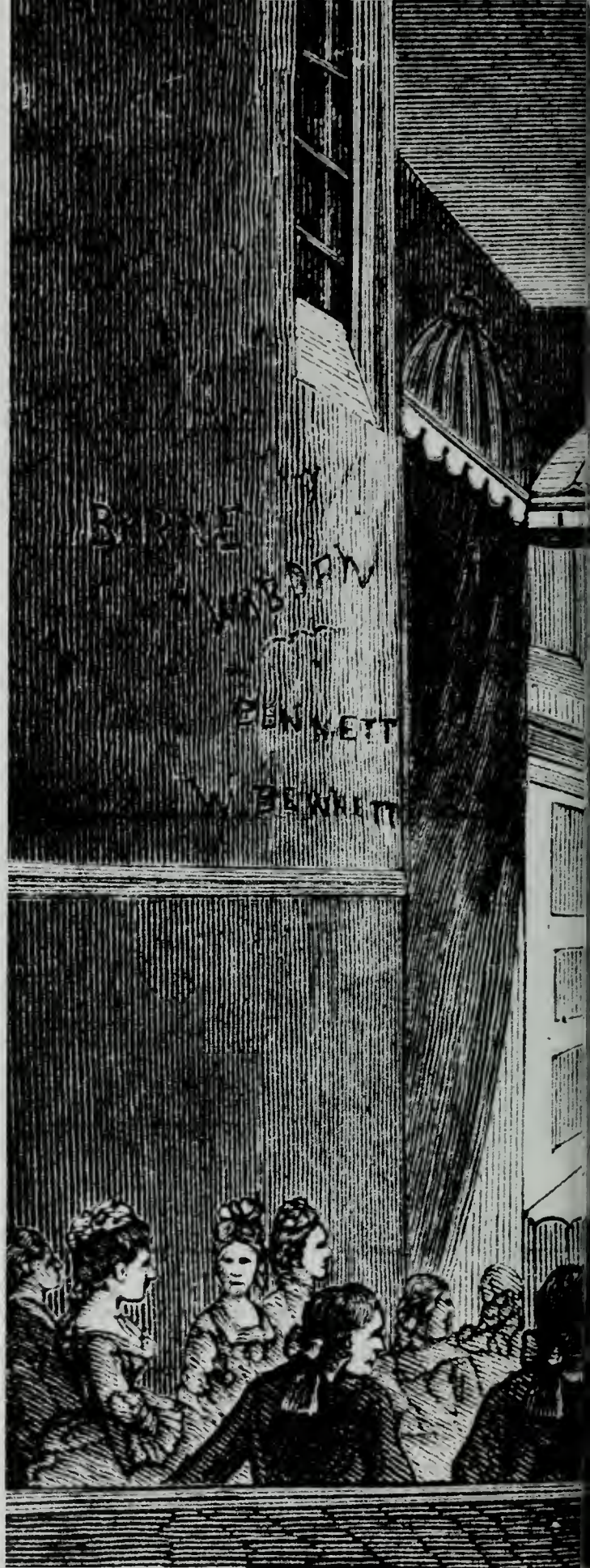
I have frequently been led to take a view of the pernicious effects resulting from theatrical exhibitions and to lament that a person of thy understanding and sensibility should ever have been prevailed upon to become an active agent in promoting any kind of amusements which are calculated to weaken the moral principle and alienate the mind from the precepts and practices of Christian religion. I wish not to enlarge much on the subject, but apprehending it was my religious duty to impart a few thoughts to the relative thereto, I have therefore taken the liberty to do it in this way, with a request that thou would accept a book entitled "The Power of Religion on the Mind" as also a pamphlet containing the sentiments of some pious characters touching the evil tendency of stage plays.<sup>3</sup>

Undeterred, Mr. Dunlop replied:

My decision notwithstanding was, and still is, in favor of theatrical establishments in all great cities; from a full conviction that, with all the ills which may be imparted to them, the balance of good must be carried to their credit.<sup>4</sup>

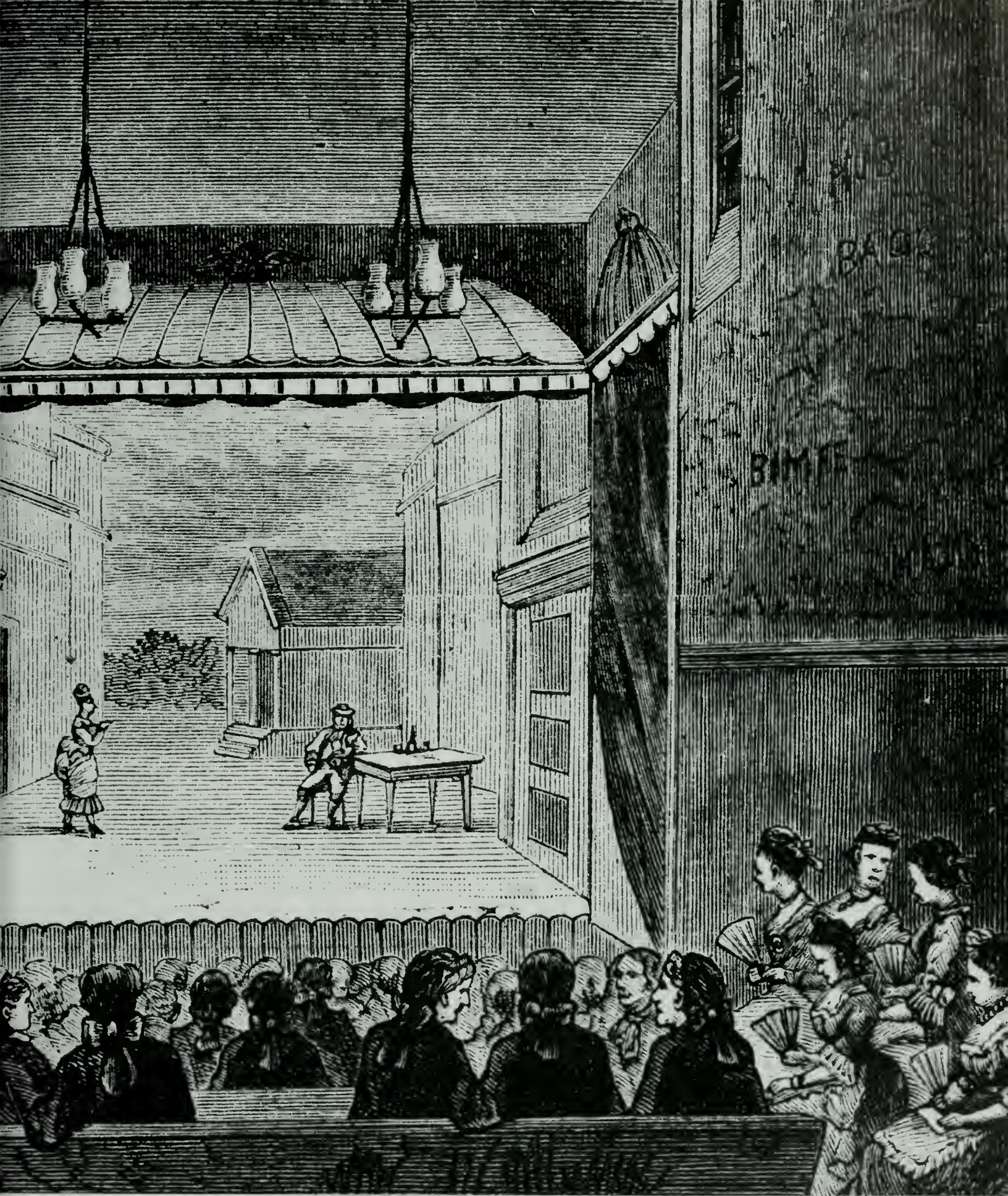
The Darby trial and this excerpt from a personal debate reflect the legal and moral forces that were among the factors shaping the form of the early American playhouses. In addition, there were difficulties such as rough climate, unfamiliar terrain, limited knowledge and tools for building, and the colonists' short life span. This combination of difficulties resulted in a lack of the three basic requirements necessary for advancement in any cultural area: a center of population, leisure time, and funds for entertainment.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, buildings which housed the first theatrical performances were not designed as theaters at all. Often empty barns and warehouses served as makeshift playhouses. Some newspapers indicate that early theaters were nothing more than an elongated rectangular room with a raised platform at one end. Certain portions of the room were roped off—the sides representing boxes and the back serving as the gallery.<sup>6</sup>

That this crude arrangement persisted even as structures were built specifically for theatrical performances is illustrated by the view we have provided of a theater often taken to represent the John Street Theatre (New York, 1767). The illustration shows a long, narrow, and "extraordinarily ugly room of no great height and without conventional side boxes of any sort."<sup>7</sup> Many historians now believe this view to be spurious and hold that "the John St. Theatre—however inadequate—was almost certainly not so dismal a playhouse as these widely published prints would have led us to believe."<sup>8</sup> Still, this particular illustration is important,



THE JOHN STREET THEATRE, SITE OF THE FIRST COMEDY BY A NATIVE author produced in the United States, provided an adequate stage in a far from elaborate setting.







## GHOSTS ON THE STAGE.

THE "Ghosts" which have within a few weeks figured so largely in all the European and American theatres are produced in accordance with well-known optical laws, and by a very simple apparatus, although considerable dexterity and practice are required to make the whole work satisfactorily. Let any one in a dimly-lighted chamber stand in front of a large vertical pane of glass, like that which is often placed in the sliding-doors between the front and back parlors, and he will see his own image as though reflected in a mirror, only it will appear to be behind the glass. The reason is, that more light is reflected from the glass than passes through it. Now behind the glass let other persons be placed, just as far behind it as the person whose image is to appear is in front, and the reflected figure will appear to be right among the real persons. Our illustration shows precisely how this law is made use of in producing "ghosts" on the stage. A plate of glass is placed at a proper inclination just back of the first "trap," the cover of which is lowered. The stage being dimly lighted the transparent glass is wholly invisible to the spectator. In front of this, under the stage, and concealed from the sight of the spectators, is the

actor whose ghost is to appear. A strong illumination is thrown upon her, usually by means of an electric light, and in obedience to the optical law which we have mentioned, her image appears upon the stage apparently among the real actors. To the eye of the spectator she is as real as any one of them. If the electric light is shut off, the image of course disappears at once; if it is gradually lowered, the figure grows dimmer and appears to vanish slowly; if the light is increased, the figure becomes more distinct, and appears to the spectator to advance toward him. This augmentation and diminution of light is best effected by a proper arrangement of movable screens to be interposed or removed as the action of the play requires the figure to advance, recede, or disappear altogether. The whole principle of the exhibition is simple enough; but to make it "work" satisfactorily demands a vast deal of care and attention, and can be attained only by frequent and laborious rehearsals. This arises mainly from the fact that the spectral figure is not seen by the real actors on the stage, and yet they must "play to" it. They must kneel to it, cower before it, run from it, stab or shoot it, as the action of the play demands. The actors must, therefore, remember precisely where the spectre, invisible to them, appears to be to the

eye of the spectator in front. The mistake of a moment in time may make the whole performance ridiculous. If everything works well the illusion is complete. The senses of the spectator are completely cheated, even though he may know exactly how it is done. It would be well worth while to investigate how far the ghostly apparitions, which are recorded from the days of the Witch of Endor downward, have been produced by the thaumaturgists availing themselves of one of the most familiar laws in optics.

THIS DESCRIPTION OF GHOSTLY EFFECTS APPEARED IN *HARPER'S WEEKLY*, VOLUME 8, 1864.



for it serves as a basis of comparison and portrays the basic and simple manner in which some early theaters were built.

While this theater is not significant in appearance, it is important for other historical reasons. Produced on its stage was Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, supposedly the first comedy by a native author which was produced in the United States, and the most popular and successful production of its time.<sup>9</sup> It is also believed that George Washington attended this theater regularly before the capital was moved to Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup> Today the site of the John Street Theatre is occupied by "Ye Olde Dutch Tavern." On one of the tavern's walls hangs a plaque commemorating the John Street Theatre as New York's major playhouse from 1767 to 1798.<sup>11</sup>

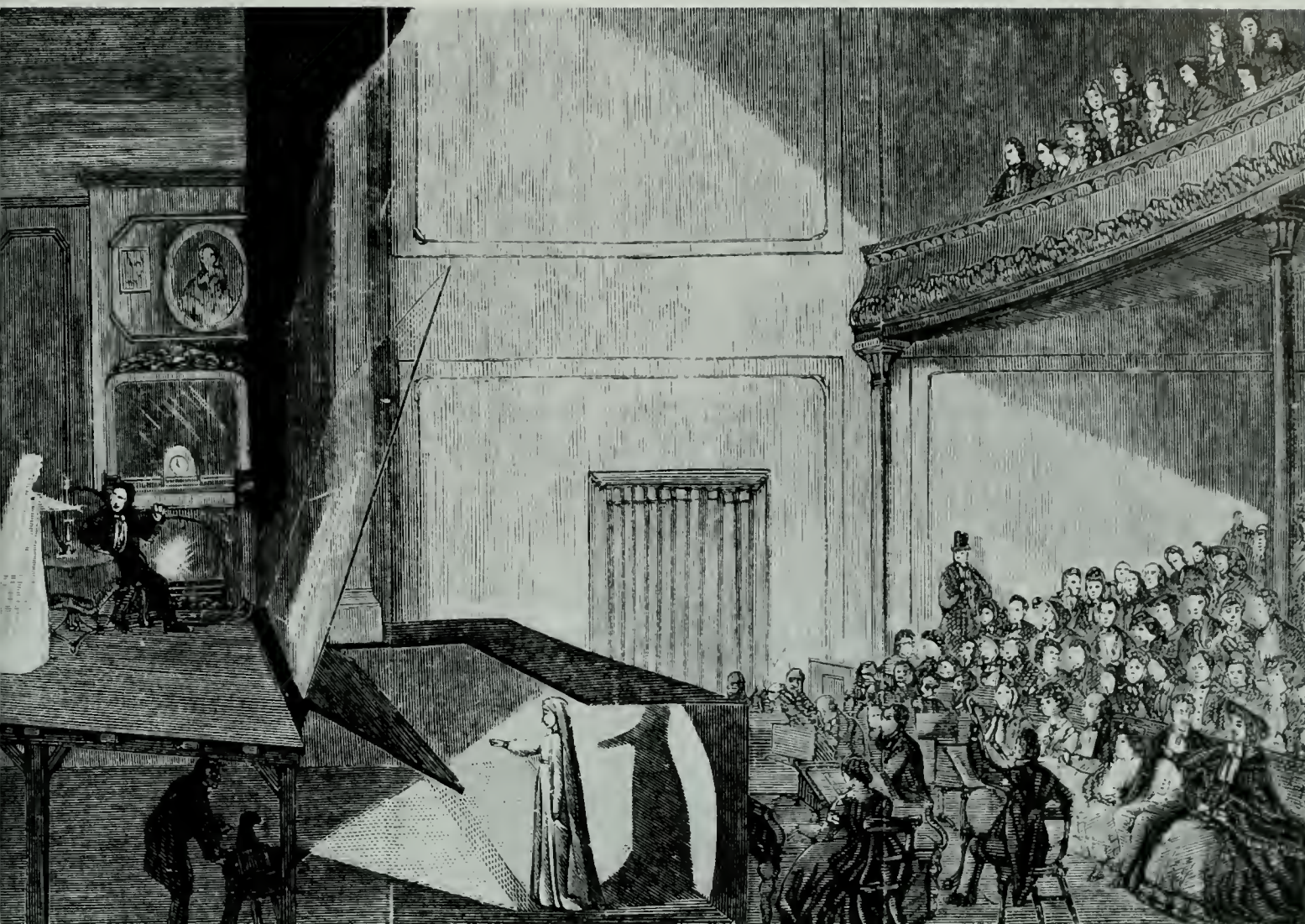
Just as there were originally few buildings in America designed expressly as theaters, there were also very few American actors and actresses. Again, the social and economic hardships present at this time account for the lack of professional entertainers. As a result, American stages were dominated by English touring companies, the first of which arrived in 1749, managed by Walter Murray and Thomas Kean. The Murray-Kean troupe was soon followed by the small acting company of Lewis Hallam. It has been said

that, with Hallam's arrival in Yorktown on June 2, 1752, "The real history of English Theater Architecture in America began."<sup>12</sup> Apparently Murray and Kean had established a playhouse in Williamsburg (although no record exists in the Library's collections). Hallam bought the building and remodeled it so that it would "be more fit to the reception of ladies and gentlemen."<sup>13</sup> This resulted in a simple design which maintained the traditional separation of boxes, pit, and gallery.<sup>14</sup>

In 1758, two years after Hallam died of Yellow Fever, David Douglass (who was responsible for the John Street Theatre) married Hallam's widow, and together they formed a colonial acting troupe. The Douglass company was typical of all early theatrical companies in its use of traveling props and scenery; for, up to this point in time, even the most populated urban centers could not support a permanent theater indefinitely. Even sixteen years later, in 1774, only New York of the five major urban areas of Colonial America could boast the existence of two permanent theater buildings.

Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Charleston formed a "first-line circuit" for Douglass. Newport, Annapolis, and Providence constituted the "second line of the Douglass Circuit—towns in which a theatre





AN EARLY EXERCISE IN SPECIAL EFFECTS PRODUCES A GHOSTLY PRESENCE ON STAGE.

building was required but in which it was neither necessary nor wise to construct theatres of any real permanence.”<sup>15</sup> It seems that Douglass used a “master theatre plan,” constructing his makeshift theaters as he and his company moved to each new location.<sup>16</sup> Although Douglass’s theaters were of doubtful architectural merit (due to their temporary nature), his work is important in that it clearly exhibits the economic hardships faced by early theatrical companies and indicates the peripatetic aspect of theater life in the American colonies.

## THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION—ITS EFFECT ON THEATER

The American Revolution brought great and rapid change to American culture. At first,

Congress did everything in its power to discourage the acting of plays. . . . Resolutions were passed which virtually prohibited play-acting altogether. Congress, of course, had no real power to regulate or prohibit theatrical entertainments in the States, and so the first of these resolutions passed on October 12, 1778

merely recommended that the several states should pass laws to prevent theatrical entertainments, horse racing, and other such diversions as all productive of idleness.<sup>17</sup>

Congress’s resolutions must have had some effect, for there are no illustrations of theaters built between 1767 and 1793 in the Library’s collections.

After the Revolution, however, American life was characterized by a new prosperity, and a subsequent cultural expansion appeared in theatrical buildings. One major change was the size of these structures. The Haymarket Theatre (Boston, 1796) illustrates this perfectly. Built by Charles S. Powell, “The new theatre was an immense wooden pile, overtopping every building in the vicinity. It had three tiers of boxes together with a pit and a gallery.”<sup>18</sup>

The 1790s introduced professional theater to Boston, “where the Puritan outlook until that time had been able to outlaw it.”<sup>19</sup> Performances began in 1792, although it was not until 1793 that the prohibition was officially lifted. The Boston Theatre (Massachusetts, 1795) was the first theater designed by a famous architect in the United States, Charles Bulfinch. Like the Haymarket, the Boston Theatre reflected the increased size of American audiences. Its capacity was 1,000.



Unlike the Haymarket, it had, as one visitor described it, "a taste and completeness that was worthy of London."<sup>20</sup> The \$40,000 building was constructed of brick and featured an arcaded porch, colonnade, and arched windows.<sup>21</sup>

Ironically, the theater's design, which incorporated the English practice of utilizing separate entry doors for various seating locations, created controversy and incited, once again, voices opposed to theatrical performances:

Holdes of box seats entered through the principal doors and passed into a large lobby and up one of two stairways to the passages that lay behind the boxes. The less-favored pit and gallery customers entered from the doors placed at the sides of the house.<sup>22</sup>

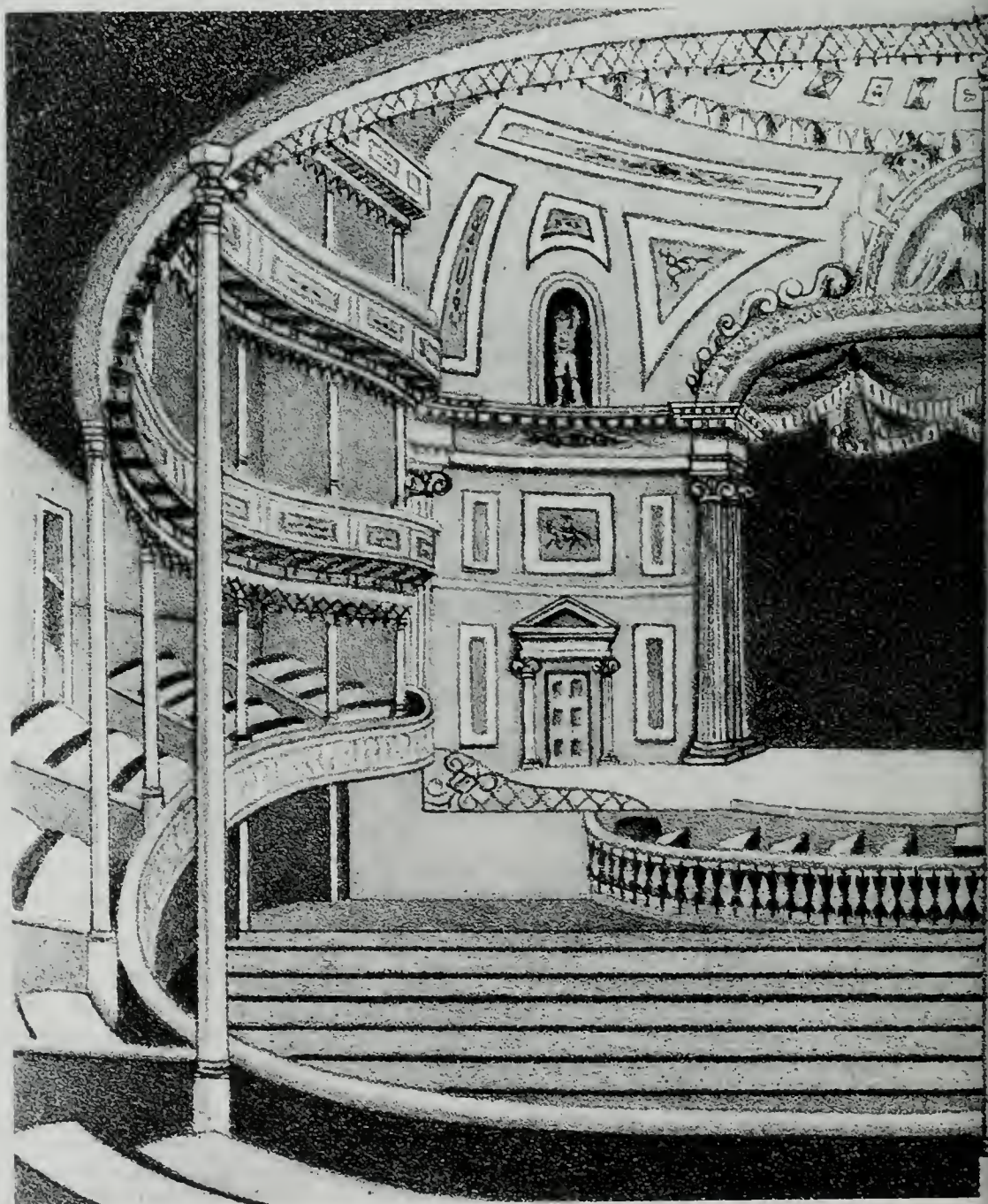
Curiously, this separation of the various parts of the theatre caused the Puritan ghosts to rise again in Boston, and opponents of the theatre made strong use of this fact, alleging that by affording a separate door to that portion of the house—usually the resort of the

vile of both sexes—a premium on vice was offered.<sup>23</sup>

However, the Boston Theatre managed to survive the furor, and other elements of its design exhibit further change in the form of the playhouse. In addition to the theater proper, plans included a ballroom, card rooms, tea rooms, and a well-equipped kitchen. A remodeling in 1798 included other innovations: the front box area was rebuilt as a parquet, separate from the pit, and one tier of boxes utilized cantilevered construction methods, thus eliminating any visual obstructions (columns) at the level below. Both of these features were relatively new and were not commonly used until well into the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

The Boston Theatre exhibits progress in the technical aspects of theater, as well as expansion in size and form. An inventory of the theatrical scenery and machinery used in productions there reveals

a fascinating variety of scenes and machines, some of which demonstrate clearly the potential of the stage:





A sunrise scene, distant towers, arches, and machinery, and crimson transparent shades, a large ship to sink, rock wings, and machinery, wind machine, iron windlace, new rocks, and cave entrance, steps, scaffold, planks, and tressels.<sup>25</sup>

The amount of scenery alone indicates a great increase in complexity. The use of machinery (e.g., the sinking ship) indicates a greater knowledge of mechanics and its adaptation to the stage, which, in turn, called for greater ability in the stagehands to carry out the desired effects.

There were several stage machines in use at the beginning of the seventeenth century—elaborate pulley systems, flying carriages, and a large boat in a storm—that may have served as a basis for the Boston Theatre's devices.

Yet another intriguing device was used for producing the image of a ghost on stage:

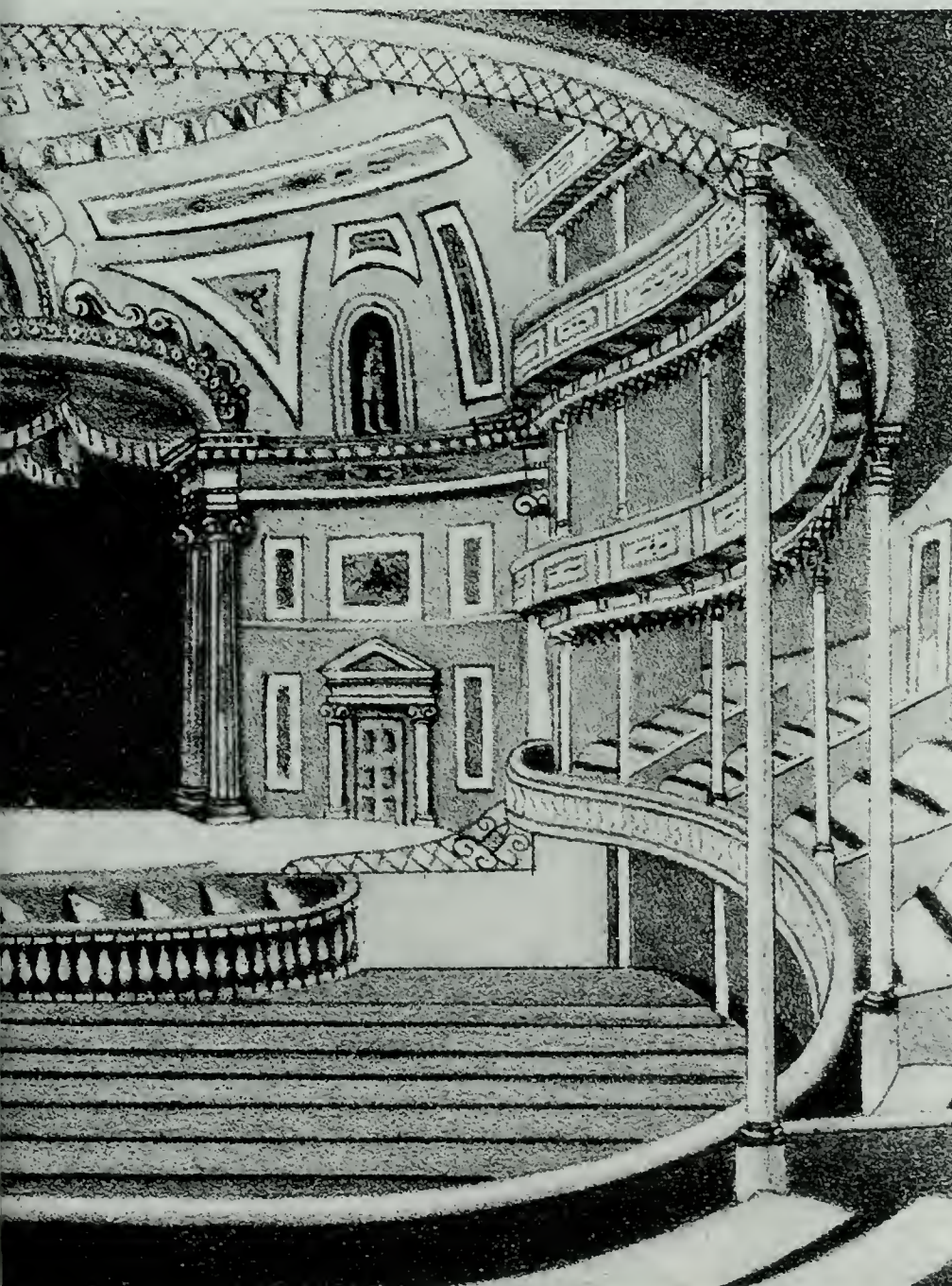
Produced in accord with well-known optical laws, let

anyone in a dimly lit chamber stand in front of a large piece of glass and he will see his own image as though reflected in a mirror, only it will appear to be behind the glass. The image will appear among them . . . with strong illumination thrown by an electric light—if the light is gradually lowered, the image fades away.<sup>26</sup>

These mechanical advances were complemented by more elaborate theatrical accessories, such as hair-pieces. All of these advancements, technical and ornamental, indicate a growing diversity in theatrical production techniques and reveal an increasing interest in providing more spectacular displays for the audience.

## THE RICHMOND THEATRE PROPOSAL

One theater design which was even more sophisticated than the Boston Theatre was the Richmond Theatre



THE DESIGN OF THE CHATHAM THEATRE in New York (1825) reflects a growing tendency toward elaborate interior ornamentation in theater design.





EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE FIRST BOWERY THEATER, NEW YORK.

proposal of Benjamin Latrobe, an English immigrant considered America's first professional architect. Latrobe's design succeeded in integrating public rooms and a hotel with the theater. The building's monumental facade derived from Roman architectural types, and the auditorium was influenced by James Lewis's Limerick Theatre, a popular English playhouse.<sup>27</sup> The merit of Latrobe's design lies not only in its immense size and combination of rooms, but also in the fact that "The proposal seems to have been caught in the tide that led ultimately to stage realism as we know it today, for it is apparent . . . it was designed without proscenium doors."<sup>28</sup> Further, the traditional pit passages were done away with. In the Richmond proposal, the audience climbed a flight of stairs from the lobby and entered the pit through central doors at the rear of the auditorium. Although it was still necessary for the audience to climb over the benches to reach the desired seat (as in the earlier John Street Theatre and many later examples), by placing the main entrance in a central location "Latrobe's au-

ditorium anticipates the common entrance system of many English and American theatres in the early years of the nineteenth century."<sup>29</sup> Behind the proscenium arch, Latrobe located a green room, costume room, nine dressing rooms, carpenter shop, and provided for all facilities necessary "to implement the increasing illusionism and spectacular display" which was becoming popular in the drama of the late eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, in the design of the stage, as well as the audience, the proposed Richmond playhouse illustrates both a transition to the theatre of the nineteenth century and the highest point of American theatre architecture in its day.<sup>31</sup>

Apparently the proposal was too advanced for its day, for the project was never realized. Thus, it was many years before the innovations present in Latrobe's designs were utilized in later theaters.





INTERIOR VIEW OF THE LAST OF FIVE BOWERY THEATERS, ALL EVENTUALLY DESTROYED BY FIRE.

## THEATER ARCHITECTURE— 1800–1850

Between 1800 and 1850, twenty-six theaters were constructed in the United States, a considerable increase over the eight constructed in the previous fifty years. About half these new theaters were located in New York, including: the Chatham Theatre (New York, 1825), the Bowery Theatres (New York, 1826/28/37/39/45), the Lafayette Theatre (New York, 1827), the Eagle Street Theatre (New York, 1835), the National Theatre (New York, 1839), the Astor Place Theatre (New York, 1847), and the Broadway Theatre (New York, 1847).

The Chatham Theatre serves as an interesting comparison to the Richmond Theatre proposal of twenty-eight years earlier. The Chatham's design incorporates an elaborately decorated proscenium opening. Col-

umns, cornice lines, niches, sculptures, and carved paneling are used extensively—and proscenium doors are present, a fact which emphasizes the innovativeness of Latrobe's Richmond Theatre design. The Chatham Theatre also utilized wooden benches with no central aisle. Side doors are visible at the first balcony, suggesting the traditional practice of separate doors for various seating areas—again ignoring the precedent set forth in Latrobe's design. However, while these traditional practices persisted, the proscenium decor does reflect a growing tendency toward elaborate interior ornamentation in theater design.

The fate of five Bowery theaters built between 1826 and 1845, all destroyed by fire (the last one burned down in 1929), illustrates one of the major problems facing early theaters: Most theatrical establishments did not have the money or knowledge necessary for competent fireproof construction. Both construction material (wood) and lighting techniques (candles or gas) contributed to the constant threat of fire in these buildings.



Another interesting, and far less dangerous, aspect found in the Bowery Theatre series is the use of massive columns on the front facade. The 1826 theater features a full temple-front facade. The fifth Bowery Theatre, built in 1845, has columns which appear even more massive. Situated as they were among smaller, residential structures, the Bowery Theatres were obviously buildings that served a different function. The buildings were not yet recognizable as "theaters," but their design did signify an important building, and thus, a transformation in theater architecture.

One interior view of the 1845 Bowery Theatre exists. It shows elaborate ornamentation and the great height the auditorium reached in order to accommodate its four balconies. An interesting component of the design is introduced at the proscenium opening. Here "stage boxes" were utilized and the proscenium doors were removed.

In his theater history, Joseph Urban discusses the development of the theater from ancient Greece through a time which encompasses the design of the Bowery's interior:

In 1639, Aleotti invented the deep, narrow wing stage and created the theatre of tiers of loges. It was a radical departure in construction, ignoring, of course, the two main laws of the antique theatres, those of good vision and good hearing. It also destroyed the intimate connection between actor and audience. This theatre was the child of a frivolous society which came not to see, but to be seen.<sup>32</sup>

The Astor Place Theatre (New York, 1847) is another building whose history depicts the growth of theater in America. Also known as the Astor Place Opera House, this theater offered opera "when it could, and almost anything else when it couldn't."<sup>33</sup> The building was very large, demonstrating the increased popularity of theatrical events. It featured refined exterior detailing, and the best acoustic principles—utilizing wood paneling and a sounding board ceiling.

One incident makes the Astor stand out significantly in American theatrical history. It was the site of a riot described in a contemporary newspaper account under the following headline:

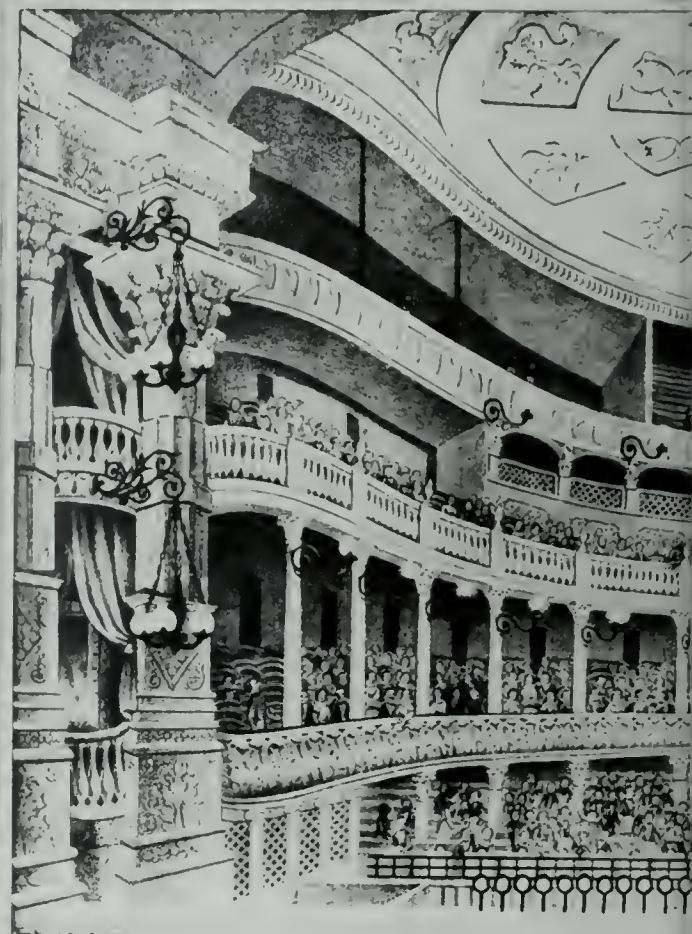
The Climax to the Bitter Dispute: Rioting erupts outside the Grecian Style Astor Place Opera House where Macready was appearing before a heckling audience of Forrest supporters<sup>33a</sup>

The "Forrest supporters" were fans of Edwin Forrest (1806–1872), the first American actor to achieve lasting fame, and it seems that Macready's performance was not to their liking. Apparently, most of the rioters remained outside the theater, but twelve were in the parquet and fifty in the amphitheater. The National Guard was brought in to restore order, and in the process, twenty-two people were killed. This tragic incident graphically illustrates the increasing importance of theater in America. For a short time, the community was in a state of violence and confusion over a single theatrical production.

Three theaters were built between 1800 and 1850 in the Philadelphia area. The Walnut Street Theatre (Pennsylvania, 1809), following a typical pattern of

theatrical expansion, derived from a former circus that had begun to offer occasional dramatic performances.<sup>34</sup> The Chestnut Street Theatre (Pennsylvania, 1822) was designed by Inigo Richards, England's leading scenic designer and cousin to the theater's co-manager Thomas Wignell.

The Chestnut was the first theater in the world to use gas lighting. This practice was not widely adopted until the 1840s, when a cheaper and more dependable supply of gas became available. As a result of the initiation of gas illumination, more border lights were used at the stage and greater control over the intensity of the lighting was achieved. By the 1840s, a "gas table" was available for general use. This device, similar to today's



SAINT CHARLES



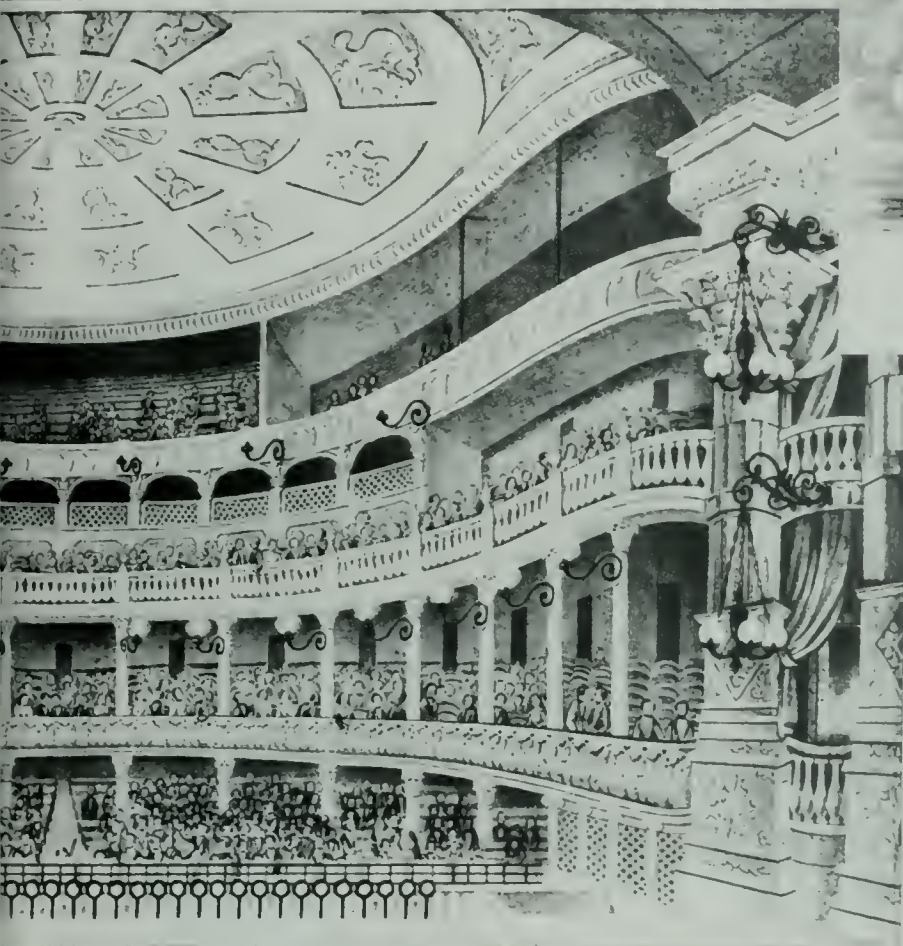
WHEN IT OPENED IN 1835, THE SAINT CHARLES THEATRE IN New Orleans was deemed the most luxurious theater in America.



control board, made it possible for one operator to control many lights from a single position.

With the opening of the Arch Street Theatre (Pennsylvania, 1828), there was a three-way struggle for supremacy in Philadelphia's theatrical circles. The Arch, under the direction of Mrs. John Drew (1820–1897), developed a reputation for its fine company and the training it gave young actors.<sup>35</sup>

The Walnut Street Theatre apparently was the prototype exterior design for all three establishments. The first similarity is found in the overall divisions of the facade. Three horizontal divisions are evident: the entry level, secondary floors, and the roof line. In all three theaters the entry level remains distinct from the



THEATRE, NEW ORLEANS



THE ARCH STREET THEATRE IN PHILADELPHIA DEVELOPED A REPUTATION for its fine company and the training it gave young actors.

upper stories, often by utilizing a different material (as in the rustication at the ground level of the Walnut Street Theatre). The second level is usually less decorative, featuring rectangular windows with some form of ornamentation. Each theater expresses a distinct roof line, often with ornamental detailing. Each building also has three vertical divisions. Typically, the central area is projected forward or backward. In all three cases, the theater's side walls receive little, if any, treatment.

When seen in the context of the buildings surrounding them, these theaters appear grand and impressive. Because the form of the buildings is so consistent, patrons could begin to associate the building's impressive form with its function as a theater. Thus, these Philadelphia performing centers reinforced the theater type more firmly in the American mind.

In Massachusetts, three theaters were built between 1800 and 1850. The facade of the Tremont Theatre (Massachusetts, 1828) is similar to that of the Philadelphia theaters and demonstrates the spread of this popular form. The Hollis Street Theatre (Massachusetts, 1810) was built as a church in 1810 and remodeled in 1885 as a theater. Here, the proscenium boxes have been moved from the stage, but have lost nothing in their degree of ornamentation.

The Boston Museum (Massachusetts, 1841) housed the most important acting company in Boston:

Opened in 1841 as a collection of side show exhibits, the museum included a music salon in which short entertainments were given. By 1843, regular plays were being offered and in 1846, following the enor-



### BARNUM'S NEW AMERICAN MUSEUM.

HAVING in a previous number illustrated the destruction of the old American Museum, we think it only due to the amusement-loving public, to illustrate the successor to that world-famous institution—Barnum's Museum—which has now traveled from the corner of Ann to midway between Prince and Spring streets, Broadway. It is a spot long known to New Yorkers as the Chinese Hall, where 16 years ago the elder Patti charmed the ears of concert-goers, and where four or five years later the Buckley Minstrels produced those capital burlesque operas, which grotesque misrepresentation of the Italian and dandy opera was the crowning triumph of burlesque and melody. In future times, however, it will be more famous as the theatre to which the modern Kruza carried his scorched feathers, preparatory to founding a grander empire higher up town, which shall represent more the national character. To accomplish so great an object, Mr. Barnum can confidently rely upon the co-operation of the government, as well as that of the people.

The new Museum, which is situated at 539 and 541 Broadway, consists of five long saloons, and a splendid Lecture Room—of which we give an exact representation. The stage of this room is 50 feet wide, by 46 feet deep, and the auditorium is about 90 feet deep, and calculated to hold 2,500 persons. The decorations are very elegant. Among the great advantages of the present building, is the rapid access in case of any emergency, as ample doors on both ends enable the entire audience to pass out in five minutes.

Considering the brief space of time occupied in fitting up the present building, the variety and number of curiosities Barnum has succeeded in gathering together, are decided proofs that he is still the most energetic and able manager of the time. As evidence of his activity, we may mention, that long ere the ruins of his old Museum were cold, he had dispatched agents to Europe to gather up, without any regard to cost, every article of purchasable curiosity they could find. He is about proceeding himself to the old world to continue the search in person.

### THE TURNERS' FESTIVAL AT CINCINNATI.

THE TURNERS are too well known to require any history—their objects, like most of those springing from the Teutonic race, are most comprehensive and praiseworthy, embracing at once health, recreation and benevolence.

Our sketch represents the gathering in front of the Turner hall, which is situated in Walnut street, just above 14th street, in that most expansive of Western cities, Cincinnati. The meeting was held to celebrate the 11th Annual Festival of the North American Turner Band, and delegations came from Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Washington, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas and New Jersey.

The Turner's Hall, the streets in the immediate vicinity, and also in several leading thoroughfares, were profusely decorated with flags and banners, while the music of many bands, and the charming melodies excellently sung by the deep-throated German voices, seemed to give inspiration to the surrounding air.

In this country, Turner societies date back from 1849, that famous year of German revolutions. Since then



BARNUM'S NEW AMERICAN MUSEUM, NO. 539 & 541 BROADWAY, N. Y., BETWEEN SPRING AND PRINCE STREETS.

they have been steadily gaining in numbers and importance, and promise in time to bind the great German heart in one.

The festivities commenced on Saturday night, Sept. 2, but the regular programme was for Monday, the 4th of Sept., when a salute was fired at daybreak to inaugurate the ceremonies.

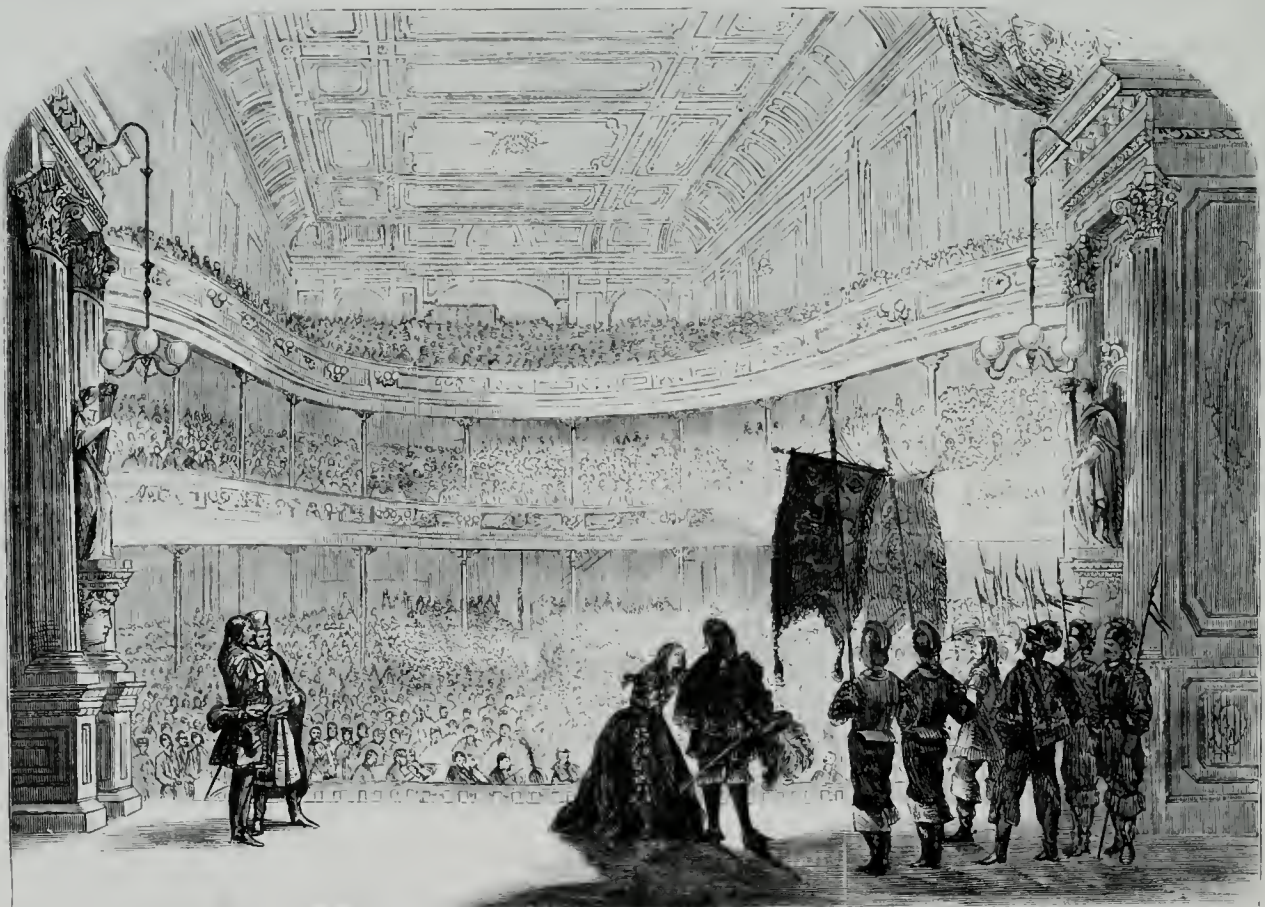
Their picnic was held at Parker's Grove, a beautiful spot about two miles from the city. Here they were addressed in an elegant speech by Mr. Jacob, the President of the Association, who took upon himself the task which Mr. Mayor Harris was prevented fulfilling through sickness. Our space will only allow us to give one extract, which admirably embodies the intent of this great Association:

"I refer to the benevolent purposes of your Association, I cannot refrain from speaking with admiration of your kindness to the sick and distressed, your generosity to the widow and orphan, and the helping hands you have always extended to the youth or the stranger in our land, to aid in procuring for them such employment that, through habits of industry and economy, they may acquire a competency, and become useful and honored citizens. Thus, on the one hand do you assist those who are worthy and willing, but who have not opportunity or means, and on the other, do you promote the material prosperity and growth of our city by bringing among us a worthy, industrious, energetic and patriotic people."

"If I consider another purpose of your order, I must accord equal praise to the labor you bestow upon the education of youth in manly sports and martial exercises, whereby their physical condition is so strengthened and improved that when danger threatens the country of their adoption, with love of which their minds have become so imbued, they are not only willing to take up arms in her defense, but are more able to treat them as the true soldier should. These exercises discourage idleness and vice, and prevent that effeminacy which was the chief cause of the downfall of the Roman Empire. Its lessons, once so formidable, which had borne the helmet, cuirass and bowler in the days of the Republic, under the burning suns and upon the scorching sands of Africa, found that panoply too heavy in the cool climates of Germany and Gaul, and the Empire was lost. Thus will it ever be with that Government whose people suffer their strength and manhood to become enfeebled by idleness, sensuality and effeminacy."

After grand balls at Turner's Hall and Jefferson Hall, and a variety of entertainments, including dancing, gymnastics, singing, music, eating and drinking, the joyous gathering broke up on the Wednesday, after spending a most agreeable time, which will long be remembered by its numerous participants.

ARTESIAN WELLS are a peculiarity of Alabama. There are two in Montgomery and three in Selma, of various depths—all pushing up their flow in the former place give a stream two inches thick, with great force, and of all the water I ever drank, this, in my taste, must merit the descriptive adjective—sweet. Before I knew that it was artesian water (so curiosity could not restrain the sensation), I remarked the peculiarly palatable flavor, and drank with great gusto and without satiety. It is very "soft" water, and entirely free from noxious minerals. One well at Selma, I understand, runs a stream almost large enough to turn a mill. No augers have failed to strike water in Alabama, and in the prairie country at much more convenient depths. On account of the trouble, to which the plantations are subject, it may be artesian, instead of surface water, and might be profitably sought for the use of "stock."



THE LECTURE ROOM OF BARNUM'S NEW AMERICAN MUSEUM.



mous popularity of "The Drunkard" (1844), a melodrama written by the company's stage manager, William H. Smith (1806–1872), a regular theater was erected. This was to house one of America's leading companies until 1872.<sup>36</sup>

A few theaters built between 1800 and 1850 were located in more remote areas. Among them was the St. Charles Theatre (Louisiana), built in 1835 by T. H. Caldwell, described as "more luxurious in appointment than any theatre yet built in America."<sup>37</sup> Although the facade appears quite simple, illustrations suggest the interior was elaborately decorated and integrated several unique design characteristics. For example, arched openings are found at the second balcony; the central area of the third balcony appears ramped and projected up and back at an odd angle; and there is a screened area at the sides of the orchestra level seating near the stage. There is no obvious reason for these innovations, and it is possible that the artist who did the engraving took certain liberties in his portrayal of parts of this auditorium.

## THEATRICAL PERSONALITIES

The theater has always spawned unique personalities. In nineteenth-century New York, two major theatrical entrepreneurs—William Niblo and Phineas T. Barnum (1810–1891), whose name is familiar today through the circus to which it is still attached—struggled for supremacy. Two theatrical buildings are particularly associated with Barnum: the American Museum (New York, 1853) and Barnum's New American Museum (New York, 1880).

Putting everything he owned up for collateral, Barnum purchased the 1853 museum, originally known as Scudder's American Museum, and all its curiosities. He was sure he could make a success of the deal, for his genius lay in his talent for promotion and mass marketing. It was Barnum's wish to "make the museum the town talk." The perfect opportunity to do this arose one day when he was approached by a poor man begging money and work. Barnum gave the man five common bricks.

Now, said I, go and lay a brick on the sidewalk at the corner of Broadway and Anne Street, another close by the museum, a third diagonally across the way at the corner of Broadway and Vesey Street, by the Astor House; put down the fourth on the sidewalk in front of St. Paul's Church, opposite, then with the fifth brick in hand, take up a rapid march from one point to the other, making the circuit, exchanging your brick at every point, and say nothing to anyone . . . but attend faithfully to the work and at the end of every hour show this ticket at the museum door; enter, walking solemnly through every hall in the building, pass out, and resume your work.<sup>38</sup>

In only thirty minutes, the "Brick Man" had drawn a

P. T. BARNUM OPENED HIS AMERICAN MUSEUM IN 1853, AIMING TO make it the talk of the town.

crowd of five hundred curious people, all gathered to solve the mystery.

Whenever the man went into the museum, a dozen or more persons would buy tickets and follow him, hoping to gratify their curiosity, in regard to the purpose of his movements. This was continued for several days . . . till finally the policeman complained that the obstruction of the sidewalks by the crowd had become so serious that I must call in my "Brick Man." This trivial incident excited considerable talk and amusement; it advertised me; and it materially advanced my purpose of making a lively corner near the museum.<sup>39</sup>

This is just one example of Barnum's unique and theatrical methods for gaining the attention that led to success. In addition to his "curiosities," performances and lectures were given at the museum—all contributing to an array of useful and entertaining attractions, combining instruction with amusement.<sup>40</sup>

When Barnum's American Museum was destroyed by fire, he built the New American Museum, which surpassed the original in size, style—and success. This immense building utilized festive detailing and ornamentation that could only be associated with Barnum's establishments: flags, domes, towers, cupolas, medallions, balconies, and skylights were employed with great dramatic effect. Its lecture room was the "most commodious and complete theatre in New York."<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, this theater was also destroyed by fire.

One later building that seems to have been influenced by the design of the New American Museum is the entertainment center of Madison Square Garden (New York, 1890).

At the time of its construction, the \$3,000,000 building was the largest in America devoted to amusements. It housed an amphitheatre, concert hall, roof garden with a small stage, and a garden theatre.<sup>42</sup>

Although this descriptive account does not mention Barnum's museum, the similarities in detailing are evident and, undoubtedly, the Madison Square Theatre was in competition with Barnum's establishments.

Barnum's chief personal competitor, William Niblo, had apparently been involved in theatrical pursuits for some time before creating a permanent establishment, Niblo's Garden (New York, 1855).

Niblo resolved to convert the almost barren spot into a blooming garden and open it to the public. In the center of this pleasant place, a neat temple was erected and dedicated to music.<sup>43</sup>

Niblo continually added to the beauties of the garden. But, in 1856 a fire swept through the facility, forcing Niblo into a retirement that proved only temporary. Public demand brought him back "to the old spot once more a desert" and led him to "erect such an establishment as should at once prove worthy of the city of New York."<sup>44</sup>

Again centered around a garden, the new establishment contained an opera house, concert hall, ballroom with parlors, drawing rooms, dressing rooms, and restaurant. The proscenium was designed after that of the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane, and the sce-



# CRÉSCITE ET MULLA

OPERA HOUSE

CALLIOPE.

NEW OPERA HOUSE, WASHINGTON.  
ERECTED 1873.

FORD'S GRAND

FORD'S GRAND OPERA HOUSE  
BALTIMORE.  
1871

FORD'S THEATRE, 10<sup>TH</sup> ST, WASHINGTON.  
NOW U.S. MEDICAL MUSEUM.  
ORIGINALLY ERECTED 1863

MELPOMENE

TERRICHORE

AMERICAN BALTO



# PLICAMMUNEL



THEATRICAL IMPRESARIO JOHN T. FORD built several theaters in the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore area, including the theater in which Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.





THE MONUMENTAL MADISON SQUARE GARDEN WAS, AT ITS OPENING, the largest building in America devoted to amusements.

nery, machinery, costumes, and accessories were all of the highest quality. With all that this facility offered, Niblo's Garden was the first success of its type—a very popular, clean, and pleasant middle class center for family entertainment.<sup>45</sup>

A third mid-nineteenth-century theatrical impresario, John T. Ford, established the Holliday Street Theatre (Baltimore, originally built in 1726). The design of this theater was advanced for its time, a fact which may be attributable to the freer social climate in Maryland.

Ford's Grand Opera House (Maryland, 1871) appears larger and more refined than the earlier Holliday Street Theatre. Its mansard roof resembles Ford's own residence and that of other buildings in the neighborhood. However, its size distinguishes it from the surrounding buildings and lends the structure an impressive character.

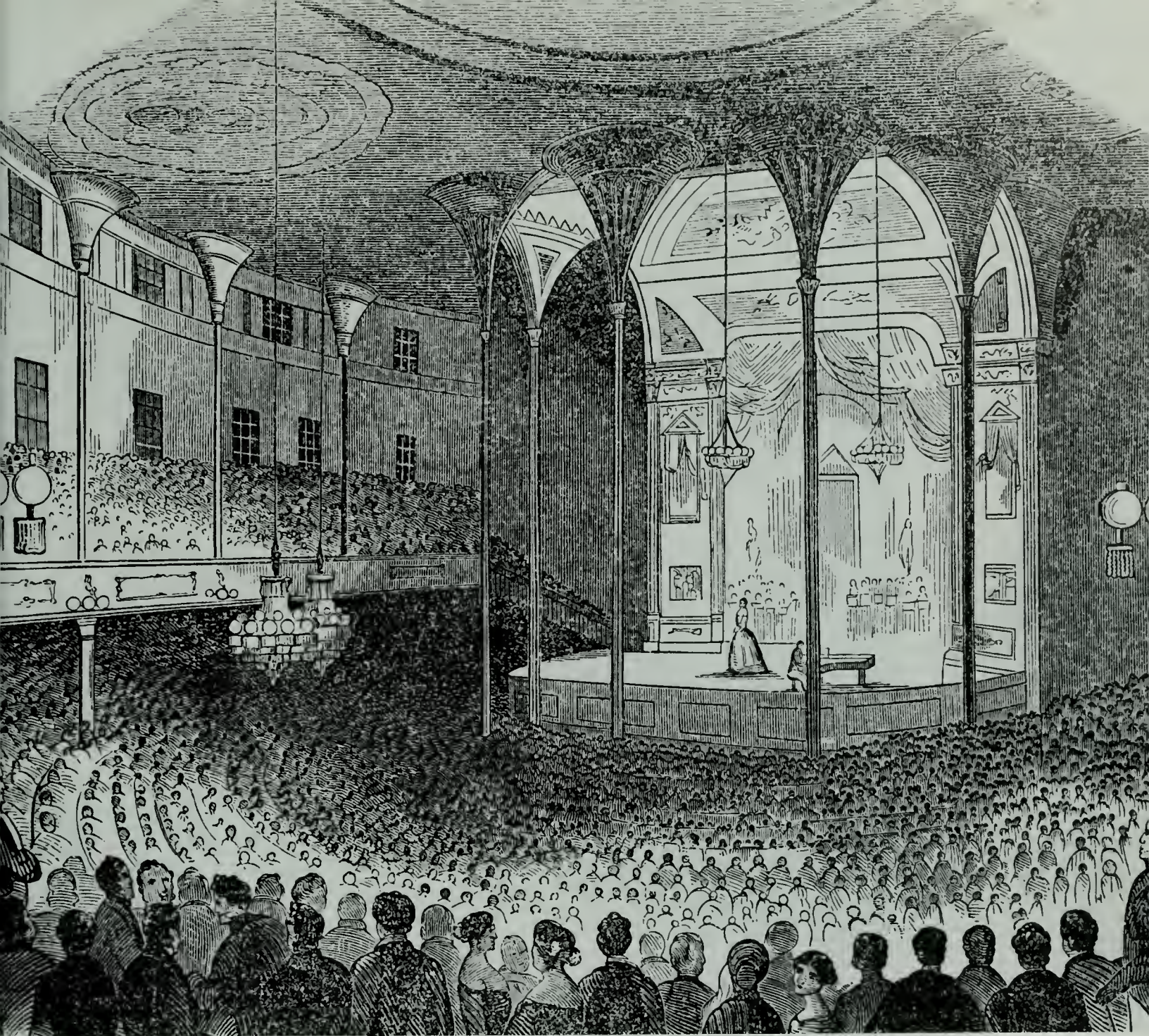
The New Opera House (Washington, D.C., 1873), another Ford establishment, was built later but appears less sophisticated. Its surface ornamentation, especially at the windows and the ground level, is less detailed. Still, the structure is distinctive in one respect—due to its corner location, two facades receive equal treatment.

Ford's Theatre (Washington, D.C., 1863) is comparable in design to typical theaters of the day. The structure was built and served as the First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., from 1834 to 1859.

Ford bought and renovated the building in 1861. Destroyed by fire in 1862, the theater was completely rebuilt according to plans drawn by J. J. Gifford. This theater is best known as the site of Pres. Abraham Lincoln's assassination by John Wilkes Booth. The tragedy occurred on April 14, 1865, during act 3, scene 2 of *Our American Cousin*. After this catastrophe Ford attempted to reopen the theater but was unsuccessful in the face of public resentment. It remained vacant for a time, then was purchased by the government for use as storage and office space. In 1946, bills were introduced into Congress calling for a restoration of the theater and its designation as a historic landmark. The bills became law in 1964, and Ford's Theatre was rededicated in 1967. Today, Ford's still stands as one of Washington's major theatrical performance centers.

It is interesting to note that Edwin Booth, John Wilkes Booth's brother and one of the foremost Shakespearean actors of his time, continued to contribute to theatrical history after a period of self-imposed retirement due to his brother's crime. In 1868 he established his own theater (New York, 1868), a solid stone building in the Second Empire style which incorporated several new features. He banished from his theater the raked stage and apron stage as well as the grooves which had previously held scenic flats. Hydraulic elevator traps, introduced by Ford, were now used at the stage to facilitate scene changes. Finally, the ceiling was designed to be of sufficient height to accommodate





"SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE" JENNY LIND ENTERTAINS A CAPACITY audience in the Castle Garden Theatre, New York.

drops which were flown out of sight. One source states that, with Booth's theater, "The American playhouse had found its pattern."<sup>46</sup>

## INTERIORS

A study of three mid-nineteenth-century New York theaters reveals further information about the changes theater interiors had undergone during the years these entrepreneurs were seeking their fortunes.

The Castle Garden Theatre (New York, 1851), the site of "Swedish Nightingale" Jenny Lind's American debut, was originally Castle Clinton, an imposing fort

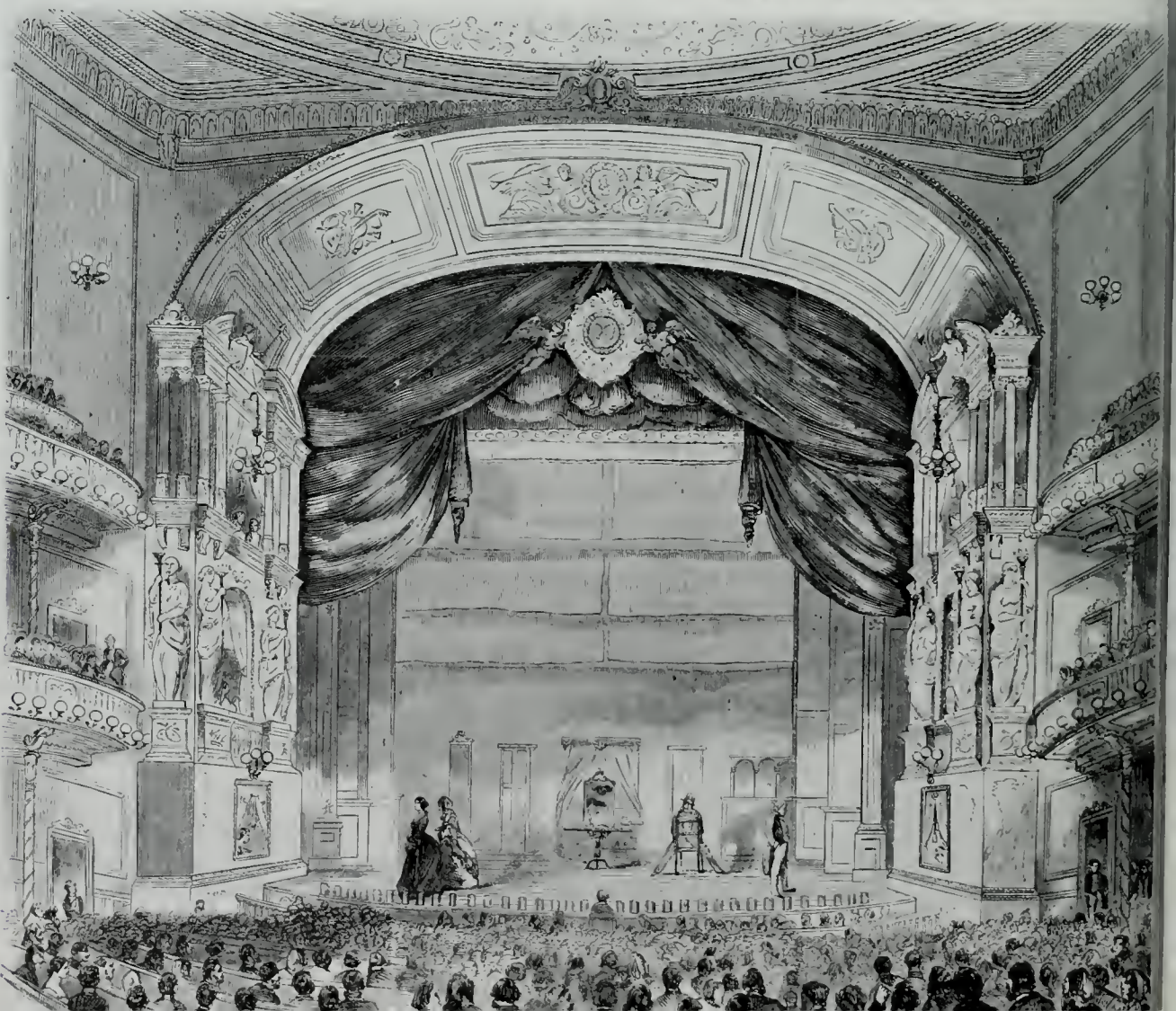
of red sandstone constructed in 1811 to stand sentinel at the mouth of the Hudson River. In the 1820s the structure was the site of band concerts and fireworks displays. The eight-foot-thick walls of the fort became a fashionable promenade, and overall the fort became one of New York's favorite outdoor amusement centers. During the 1840s the owners made additions to the fort, including a circular wooden superstructure and roof, seating for six thousand people, and a unique thrust stage.<sup>47</sup> Although some histories indicate this as the most popular American stage form, the Castle Garden stage is the only example of the form found in the Library's collections.

Generally, the thrust stage has been described as follows:

Unlike today's stage, a large forestage extended into the audience, and it was here that the acting took place. Box sets (which recreated the illusion of an ac-



THE DESIGN OF BUCKLEY'S Theater in New York (1856) assured easier traffic flow and audience seating than in other theaters of the time.



THE ELABORATELY DESIGNED Laura Keane Theatre had a large seating capacity—but no central aisle in the orchestra.



tual room and had workable doors and windows) were not yet in use. Instead, painted drops set the scene. Actors made their entrance through pairs of stage doors which were located in front of the proscenium—two doors on each side. Boxes over these doors were called stage boxes and were much in demand.<sup>48</sup>

Castle Garden, however, does not conform to this description. It did not have proscenium doors or stage boxes. The proscenium opening was elaborately decorated, but because of its location, the proscenium's traditional function as a dividing wall between actor and audience was destroyed. The audience surrounded the performers, thus increasing hearing and seeing capacity for a number of patrons. However, the columns surrounding the stage obstructed the view for others.

The interior of Buckley's Theatre (New York, 1856) was more rectangular than other theaters of its time, and it accommodated significantly fewer people than Castle Garden. The orchestra seating appears level, while the balcony, with its curvilinear form, seems ramped at the center rear. A staircase leading up to the balcony is visible at the rear of the auditorium. Entry doors are located at the sides of the back wall, with aisles—including a central aisle—leading down at the orchestra level. These features made traffic flow and audience seating significantly easier than at Castle Garden.

Buckley's Theatre utilized ceiling and wall ornamentation, but the Laura Keane Theatre (New York, 1856) was even more elaborate, especially at the proscenium opening. Stage boxes appear at two levels, corresponding to the two balconies of the auditorium, making the seating capacity of this theater the greatest of the three under consideration. However, the design is lacking in other respects. The entrance to the seating areas is found near the stage, and no central access aisle is provided.

From the information gathered on these three representative theaters and on other theaters represented in the Library's collections one may conclude that American theaters of this period were designed in response to a variety of factors. Among these were available funds, site restrictions, diverse theatrical productions, and personal preference. We are left with an impression not of steady improvement in design, but of significant efforts to change and adapt that are reflected in the diversity characteristic of American theater buildings.

## THEATER ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

When theater reached the American West in the 1800s, the geographic character of the new land contributed a distinctive quality to western theater architecture. The early eastern theaters had been crude and simple structures, and so were those on the western frontier. Pioneers reencountered all the difficulties of the first colonists, and the buildings reflected these hardships. As in the East, existing buildings housed the first western theaters:

Although there was always an intellectual and moral element present on the frontier, most of the early prospectors—away from home . . . sought diversions

and geniality; sometimes escape, at the bar or gambling tables of local saloons, almost invariably a new camp's first public building. Before long a hotel grew up around the saloon. . . .

Another outgrowth of the saloon was the frontier theater, often located on the floor above the dance hall, but sometimes using the bar itself as a stage. The early theaters were appropriately rustic and makeshift.<sup>49</sup>

Some of the individual personality of early western theater is revealed in a glimpse of the Thespians, amateur performers in Missouri. These were

Young men of larger towns who wanted to brighten their lives with some form of entertainment more intellectually rewarding than drinking and carousing. . . . They formed societies for the expressed purpose of whiling away the hours of the long winter nights with dramatic rehearsals and performances. . . . As early as 1832, a notice announcing the formation of a Thespian Society appeared in *The Missouri Intelligencer*.<sup>50</sup>

The theaters used by the Thespians were makeshift arrangements—usually some sort of public meeting room, and the scenery was of similar quality:

The scenery used by the Western amateurs could have been little more than rustic painted drops or screens: stock settings to represent a room in a house, a garden or a street. And when the exact setting was not available, the nearest thing to it was made to do.<sup>51</sup>

Apparently State Fair Week was very popular in this area, for performances given by the Thespian Society during this week brought great financial success. With its earnings, the society decided to build an "ornamental and useful building for the city on a lot which they had already purchased."<sup>52</sup> The plans indicated that the first floor would house the theater and the second floor would accommodate halls for the Masonic and Odd Fellows fraternities. Thespian Hall (Missouri, 1855), as it is known today, was remodeled as an Opera House in the early 1900s and was later used as a movie theater.

The Metropolitan Theater (California, 1853), in San Francisco, bears the distinction of having been run by the first female manager in the state.

The "proud but shabby" opera house of John Piper (Nevada, 1863) is typical of mining town theaters and the familiar natural hazard that faced these structures: "The evil genius of wooden opera houses visited its fiery wrath on Piper's twice."<sup>53</sup> In its final design, Piper's featured a raked stage, a cloakroom for gentlemen's firearms, cantilevered balconies, and a "floor laid over springs." These additions undoubtedly upgraded the theater and provided a more comfortable setting for entertainment in such a rugged locale.

The Bird Cage Theatre (Arizona, 1881) is perhaps the best example of a mining town theater:

The Bird Cage in Tombstone, a variety hall of dubious repute, which had its heyday in the early 80's, was an adobe structure consisting of a saloon and a theatre, separated by a partition. Along the upper part of the theatre were arranged 12 boxes, six on each side, jutting out from the wall, and suspended some-



what like a Canary Cage. Drinks could be ordered in the boxes, served by girls willing to render a song or just about anything else for a little gold. Since the entertainment at The Bird Cage was hardly familiar fare, the women of the community rarely attended.<sup>54</sup>

However, just as the East Coast theaters grew more distinguished, both architecturally and theatrically, so the mining town playhouses also developed more refined qualities:

The miners, however, quickly began to feel that their playhouses should be something refined and elegant, a sort of cultural buoy in a sea of debauchery. As the first big wealth began pouring into the mining towns and as more and more women appeared on the scene, a concern for theatre in the more classical sense became evident. Although most theatres were still adjacent to saloons, their interiors became places of grandeur, and every attempt was made to give performances an aura of respectability.<sup>55</sup>

One problem in creating "respectable" theater lay in the reluctance exhibited by many performers to follow the western migration. Even encouraging reports of profitable tours could not persuade some actors to travel west. Those who did overcome their fear of savages and the unknown faced other challenges particular to theater on the frontier:

Perhaps the most striking feature of theatre on the mining frontier was contrast. Since the miners came from such varied backgrounds, their attitudes toward theatrical activities were bound to be no less diverse. . . . To attract as large an audience as possible, the management played to this diversity—pairing Shakespeare with farce, melodrama with burlesque, opera with Irish ballads. Incongruous though these elements might be, they reflected the heterogeneity of the mining society, as well as a naivete struggling for sophistication.<sup>56</sup>

The watchword of theatrical success in the mining camps was versatility. Actors had to sing, dance, perform comedy and tragedy, paint scenery, make costumes, and even be managers.<sup>57</sup>

In time, the frontier theater lost much of its distinctive character. With the westward expansion of railroads in the late 1800s, the gap between the East and the West was narrowed. Westerners were able to see productions which had originated in the East just a few seasons before, and often with the same performers. "As the nation became bound together by an improved system of transportation and communication, it became standardized theatrically, one of several factors fostering uniformity in American culture"<sup>58</sup> in general, and in theatrical buildings in particular.

Although this standardization brought about great progress in the world of theater as seen in positive changes in the quality of performances and accommodations, one must not forget that variety was representative of early theater. The struggle for acceptance on the colonial and western frontiers and the wide array of people, places, and performances that characterized those struggles are symbolic of the strength, imagination, and vitality of theater both today and yesterday.



This article is adapted from a research paper entitled "Historic American Theatres" which discusses theater buildings from 1750 to 1900, as found in various collections in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. The collections consulted include: Geographic Files (N.A.), the Gottscho Photographic Collection, Graphics Files (Specific Subject), and the Historic American Building Survey records.

Margaret Maliszewski graduated from the Catholic University of America in 1985 with a B.S. in Architecture. She has worked for local architectural firms and has completed internships with the National Building Museum and the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. Ms. Maliszewski received a Master's degree in Architectural History and a Certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Virginia in 1988. She is now on the staff of the Research Department of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

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# PERFORMANCES AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## MUSIC

### Gershwin and Rodgers Celebrated

A UNIQUE HIGHLIGHT OF THE library's 1987–1988 concert season was made possible by the discovery of a large number of manuscript scores, parts, and lyric sheets in a Warner Brothers warehouse in Secaucus, New Jersey. This material, long thought to have been lost, enabled scholars to reconstruct for performance the scores of two Gershwin musicals, *Primrose* and *Pardon My English*. Complete concert performances of these works were presented in "A Gershwin Evening" at the Coolidge Auditorium on May 15, 1987.

This was the American premiere of *Primrose*, written in 1924 and originally produced in London. Among the notable things about this show is that it represents Gershwin's first attempt at orchestrating his own music, a task he knew would be necessary to completing the *Concerto in F* (in progress at the time) and to his fuller symphonic composing generally. *Pardon My English*, written just before *Porgy and Bess*, had not been heard since 1933. Despite its containing what is arguably some of the composer's best music, *Pardon My English* appears to have had not a great deal else going for it and was rather a flop in its day. The one musical number that became a standard—"Isn't It a Pity"—was placed in its original context with this performance, along with several songs that had been cut in rehearsal and had never before been performed, including the likes of "Freud and Jung and Adler" and "He's Oversexed!"

Selected items from the Music Division's Gershwin Collection were displayed in the Coolidge Auditorium foyer in connection with the event. The Gershwin Collection is the largest public collection of original source material on the composer's life and work, consisting of music manuscripts, pictorial material, Gershwin's book and record collections,



GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN, IN GEORGE'S RIVERSIDE DRIVE PENTHOUSE, MARCH 1931. GERSHWIN COLLECTION, Music Division.



RICHARD RODGERS conducting at a rehearsal of *South Pacific*. Oscar Hammerstein Collection, Music Division.



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Lyrics By  
IRA GERSHWIN

Music By  
GEORGE GERSHWIN  
Dancing numbers staged by  
Georgie Hale



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THE PIANO-VOCAL SCORE FOR *PRIMROSE*. THIS musical comedy was produced in London in 1924. The run was so successful that it became the first Gershwin musical to be published in a complete piano-vocal score. *Gershwin Collection, Music Division.*

ALTHOUGH *PARDON MY ENGLISH* (1933) RAN for only forty-six performances, selections were nevertheless published. *Gershwin Collection, Music Division.*



THE BEAUX ARTS TRIO—CELLIST BERNARD GREENHOUSE, VIOLINIST ISIDORE COHEN, AND PIANIST Menahem Pressler. The 1987–1988 season marked the farewell performances with the Trio of founding member Bernard Greenhouse.

and papers of his brother and lyricist Ira.

On June 8 another legend of the American musical theater was celebrated as the Library marked the eighty-fifth anniversary of Richard Rodgers's birth with a concert performance of *Babes in Arms*. The occasion also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the show's Broadway premiere in 1937. Rodgers and his lyricist of eighteen years, Lorenz Hart, were at the peak of their collaborative artistry with this show and it produced some of their most enduring standards—"Where or When," "The Lady Is a Tramp," and "My Funny Valentine," among others.

The Library of Congress houses manuscripts from all periods of Rodgers's career, primarily in the form of autograph sketches from the musicals written with Hart and later with Oscar Hammerstein II, manuscripts for films and television, and incomplete scores and orchestrations for many other works. These materials were presented by the composer to the Library of Congress during the 1950s and 1960s.

## Beaux Arts Trio

THE LIBRARY CONTINUED TO enjoy good fortune in having two of the world's premier chamber ensembles in residence. The Beaux Arts Trio, though somewhat less a household name than its elder sibling Juilliard Quartet, enjoys no less an artistic reputation and an audience that is large and steadily growing. Called "the leading piano trio in the world today" (*The New York Times*) and "the touchstone of excellence in this most intimate of music making" (*Gramophone*), the Beaux Arts Trio continues to make its mark as "one of chamber music's handful of supergroups" (*The Los Angeles Times*) with some one hundred performances a year and recordings that have received the industry's highest honors. But as Nicholas Delbanco points out in his book *The Beaux Arts Trio* (William Morrow, 1985), "their ongoing legacy is to have made legitimate the piano trio as ensemble for a musician's career."

Deriving from variously accompanied keyboard sonatas of the eighteenth century, the piano trio—an instrumentation of piano, violin, and cello—has a rich literature whose early development is encompassed primarily in works by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Acknowledged masterworks for this combination of instruments were also composed by Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Dvorak, and Tchaikovsky, as well as twentieth-century composers such as Ravel, Copland, and Ives. Nonetheless, the piano trio had fallen to rela-





THE BEAUX ARTS TRIO—VIOLINIST ISIDORE COHEN; RECENT MEMBER, CELLIST PETER WILEY; AND PIANIST Menahem Pressler.

tive neglect as a performing medium when the Beaux Arts Trio made its debut in 1955 at Tanglewood. Pianist Menahem Pressler has described the prevailing attitude of the time thus: "either it's a poor man's concerto—two strings and half a piano—or it's one person accompanying two soloists." Today the piano trio is eminently respectable and taken for granted, with many such ensembles on the current concert scene—a situation that the rise of the Beaux Arts has both paralleled and made possible.

The 1987–1988 season marked the farewell performances with the Trio of cellist and founding member Bernard Greenhouse. The Trio has had only one other personnel change in its thirty-two years, when violinist Isidore Cohen replaced Daniel Guilet in 1970. Chosen to replace Mr. Greenhouse was cellist Peter Wiley, a performer familiar to Library of Congress music fans who have enjoyed hearing him for several seasons as one of the LC Summer Chamber Festival artists.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute, Mr. Wiley was at the age of twenty appointed principal cellist of the Cincinnati Symphony, a position he held for eight years until resigning in 1983 to pursue a solo career. As a chamber artist Mr. Wiley has collaborated with the likes of Peter Serkin, Andre-Michel Schub and Emmanuel Ax. He has a long association with the Marlboro Festival and Music from Marlboro tours and has also appeared at the Settimane Musicale Internazionale festival in Naples.

## Milton Babbitt at Seventy

THE LIBRARY OPENED ITS 1987 Festival of American Chamber Music on April 25 with a concert of works by Milton Babbitt, in honor of the composer's seventieth birthday. Professor Babbitt was present for the event, whose program included his compositions for soprano and piano, soprano and tape, and two pieces for violin and piano, "Sextets," composed in 1966, and "The Joy of More Sextets," composed in 1986–87, which received its premiere performance.

It was appropriate that a festival of American chamber music open with a concert featuring the works of Babbitt, one of the most influential of American composers. Born in Philadelphia and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, where he learned to play the violin and later the clarinet, Babbitt as a youth became interested in the two subjects that would continue to fascinate him throughout his life: mathematics and music. His compositional theories and practices reflect his profound involvement with these two fields. He was the first composer to extend Schoenbergian twelve-tone techniques to other musical elements, such as rhythm, dynamics, and timbre, creating the concept of "total serialism." In the early 1950s Professor Babbitt was invited to become the first composer-consultant at RCA. His involvement in the construction of the Mark II RCA synthesizer led to the establishment in 1959 of the Columbia-Princeton Elec-

tronic Music Center, of which he is still a director. A work performed on the program, "Philomel" for soprano and tape, was written using this synthesizer.

Professor Babbitt's influence on contemporary musical thought has been further manifest through his widespread activity as a teacher of composers and theorists. He has been a member of the faculty of Princeton University since 1938, and has also taught at the New England Conservatory, the Juilliard School, the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies, the Berkshire Music Center, and Darmstadt summer courses. In 1982 he was awarded a special citation by the Pulitzer Committee for "his life's work as a distinguished and seminal American composer."

## Moldenhauer Bequest

A BEQUEST OF HANS MOLDENHauer has resulted in the greatest composite gift of music materials ever to be received by the Library's Music Division.

Consisting of a large quantity of autograph music manuscripts, letters, and documents spanning the history of musical creativity from the twelfth century to modern times, the gift becomes a part of the Moldenhauer Archives at the Library of Congress. These archives were established in April 1987 by an earlier gift from Dr. Moldenhauer, who died in October 1987, and were supplemented with major manuscripts of Johannes Brahms acquired in 1988 from Mary Moldenhauer, his widow.

With this bequest, Dr. Moldenhauer also established the Moldenhauer Archives Foundation at the Library of Congress.

Hans Moldenhauer, pianist, teacher, author, and founder of the Moldenhauer Archives for the study of music history from primary sources, arrived in Spokane, Washington, on July 5, 1939. The previous year he had emigrated to the United States from his native Germany, where he had been born in Mainz in 1906. Soon after arriving in the United States, he began his search for a place to settle permanently. As an expert alpinist, he was attracted to the mountainous regions of the country and chose to make Spokane his home. During World War II he served in the U.S. Mountain Troops. Upon his return to Spokane he became the first student under the G.I. Bill at Whitworth College, from which he graduated in 1945 with a bachelor's degree in music. In the same year, he received an honorary doctorate in music from Boguslawski College of Music in Chicago. In 1946, the Spokane Con-





HANS MOLDENHAUER

servatory, which he had founded in 1942, was incorporated as an educational institution. He received a doctorate in musicology from Chicago Musical College, Roosevelt University. His doctoral thesis, *Duo-Pianism*, was published in 1950 and today remains the only published work on the literature for two pianos.

In the early 1950s he was diagnosed as having retinitis pigmentosa, a degenerative disease of the retina, which slowly led to total blindness. As he could no longer see well enough to read music, he and his late wife Rosaleen devoted themselves full-time to collecting and writing pursuits. The collection they amassed has become one of the greatest archives of primary source materials in music ever assembled.

Among the treasures of the Moldenhauer Archives in the Library of Congress are:

(1) A copy, in his characteristically fast and flowing hand, by Ludwig van Beethoven of the trio and sextet, principally vocal parts with accompaniment

sketched in, from Act II of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, probably made as a study for the composition of the ensemble numbers in *Fidelio* and therefore dating from 1803 to 1805. Beethoven admired Mozart greatly but could not himself conceive of composing an opera to the libretto of *Don Giovanni*. He is supposed to have said of it: "Art, which is sacred, should never be degraded to serve as a pretext for so scandalous a subject." Nevertheless, this extraordinary manuscript attests to his admiration for Mozart's genius both as a musician and a dramatist.

(2) The holograph full score of Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo*, Hebraic Rhapsody for Violoncello and Large Orchestra. This is one of the major works for solo instrument and orchestra of the twentieth century. It was inspired by Ecclesiastes: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. . . . Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." This manuscript joins the nearly comprehensive collection of Bloch holographs in the Library

of Congress.

(3) The holograph manuscript of Frédéric Chopin's *Prelude* for Piano in A flat (op. Posth., B.86). Authentic holographs of Chopin are rare, there being many copies by his pupil, Julian Fontana, which, until recently, have been mistaken as Chopin's own manuscripts. This holograph of the *Prelude*, which dates from 1834, is, according to noted Chopin authority Arthur Hedley, "one of the most interesting authentic Chopin manuscripts in the United States. It will be useful to American musicologists as another standard by which to judge of the authenticity of such documents."

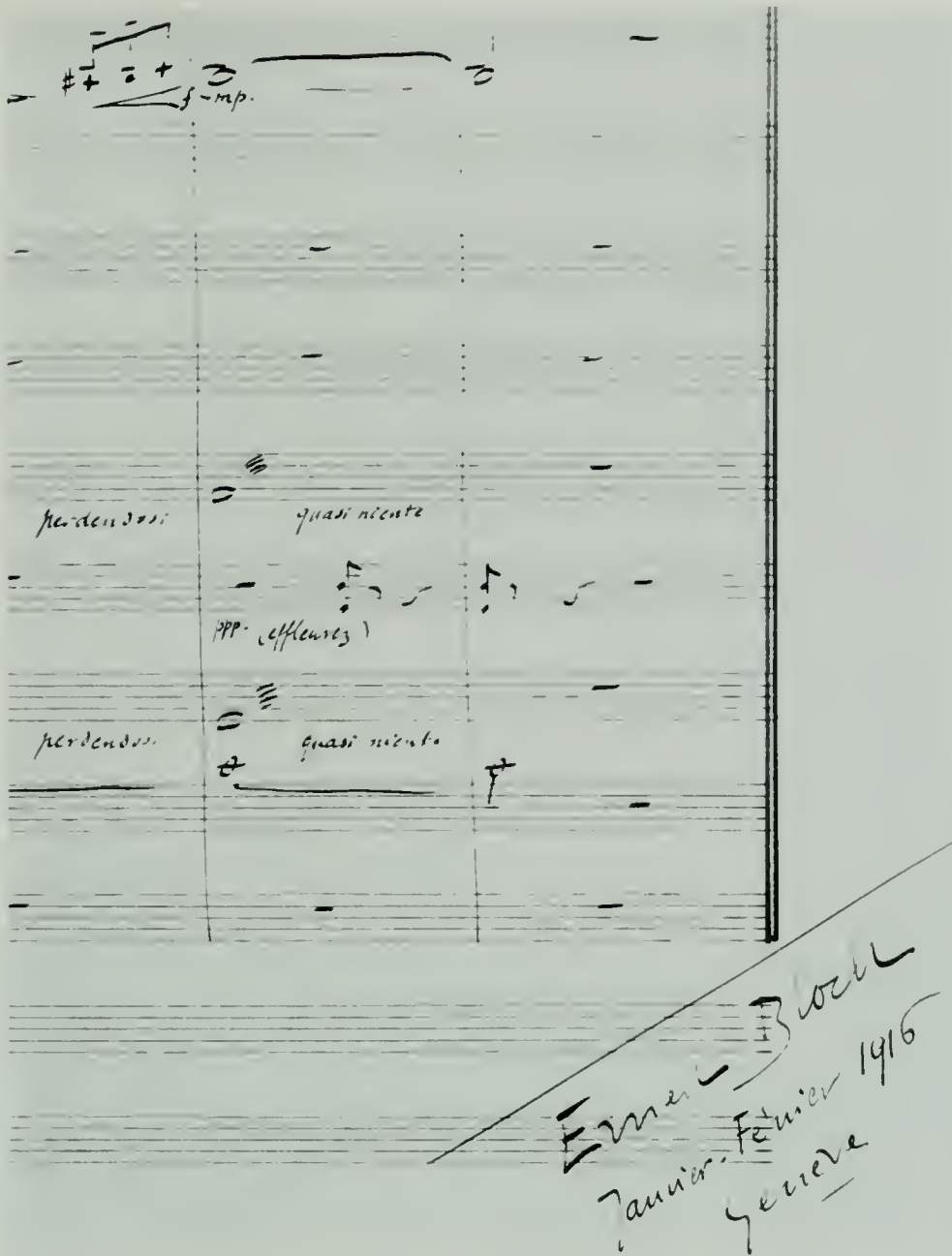
(4) The holograph of César Franck's *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* for piano solo. This is one of the major solo piano works of the late nineteenth century, and one of the most notoriously difficult. It was given its first performance by the famous virtuoso, Mlle. Marie Poitevin, in 1885 and it is from this manuscript that she performed. Franck's dedication to her appears at the end.

(5) A signed autograph letter of George



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Frideric Handel to Charles Jennens, in English. Jennens, recently described by Christopher Hogwood as "Handel's arrogant, irascible collaborator" and called by his contemporary, Dr. Samuel Johnson, "a vain fool crazed by his wealth . . . verily, an English 'Solyman [sic] the Magnificent,'" was the author of the librettos for Handel's *Messiah* and *Saul*, among other works. This letter, one of the very few in which Handel discusses musical matters, describes specifications for an organ to be built by the well-known organ builder, Richard Bridge, for Jennens's restored residence in Gopsall.

(6) Holograph of Felix Mendelssohn's arrangement, unpublished, of the over-

ture to *Elijah* for two pianos. Sir George Grove and Alfred Einstein regarded *Elijah* as the greatest oratorio of the nineteenth century. This arrangement served both as the working draft and as the finished copy for use in performance.

(7) Holograph of two pages, full score, of the sextet from Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* showing extensive revisions in both the vocal and instrumental parts. This manuscript provides an interesting, detailed look at the composer working on his most famous opera.

(8) The holograph, full score, of a major section of the coronation scene from *Boris Godunov* in Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration and arrangement of Modest Mussorgsky's original.

Rimsky-Korsakov recalled a concert at which this scene was performed: "The effect achieved was magnificent; and of this, it would seem, even those of Mussorgsky's admirers were convinced who had been ready to accuse me of spoiling his works, because of the alleged conservatory learning I had acquired—learning that ran counter to the freedom of creative art—for example, Mussorgsky's harmonic incoherence." There is no doubt that Rimsky-Korsakov's revisions violated the original in several important ways. He changed its dramatic intent through shifting the focus from the tragedy of the Russian people to the personal tragedy—more suited to grand opera—of Boris Godunov. Furthermore, he corrected idiosyncrasies of Mussorgsky's musical style that we now recognize as significant characteristics of his genius. On the other hand, there is no doubt either that Rimsky-Korsakov's revision of *Boris Godunov* is a masterpiece in its own right, and probably saved the work from serious neglect in its time except by a small number of devoted enthusiasts who could not have brought it to its position of international prominence in the operatic repertory.

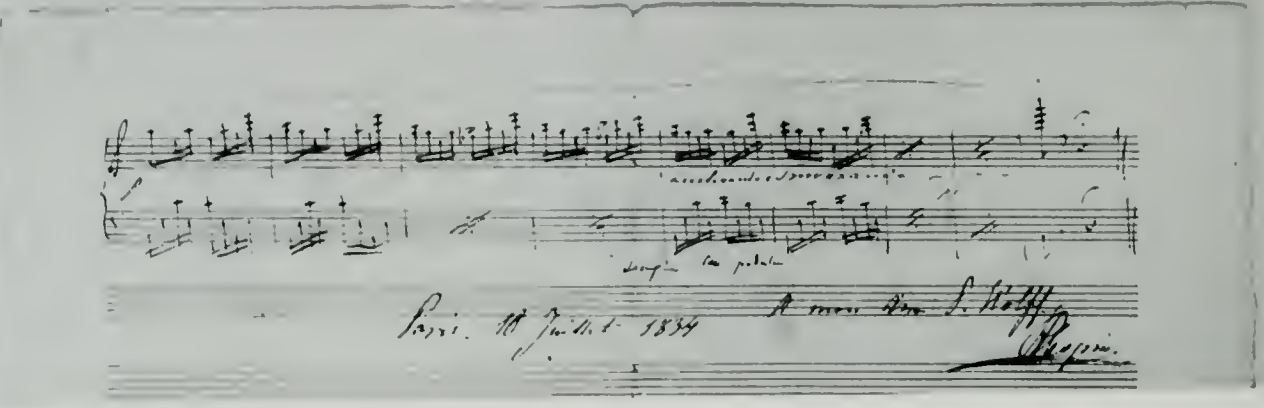
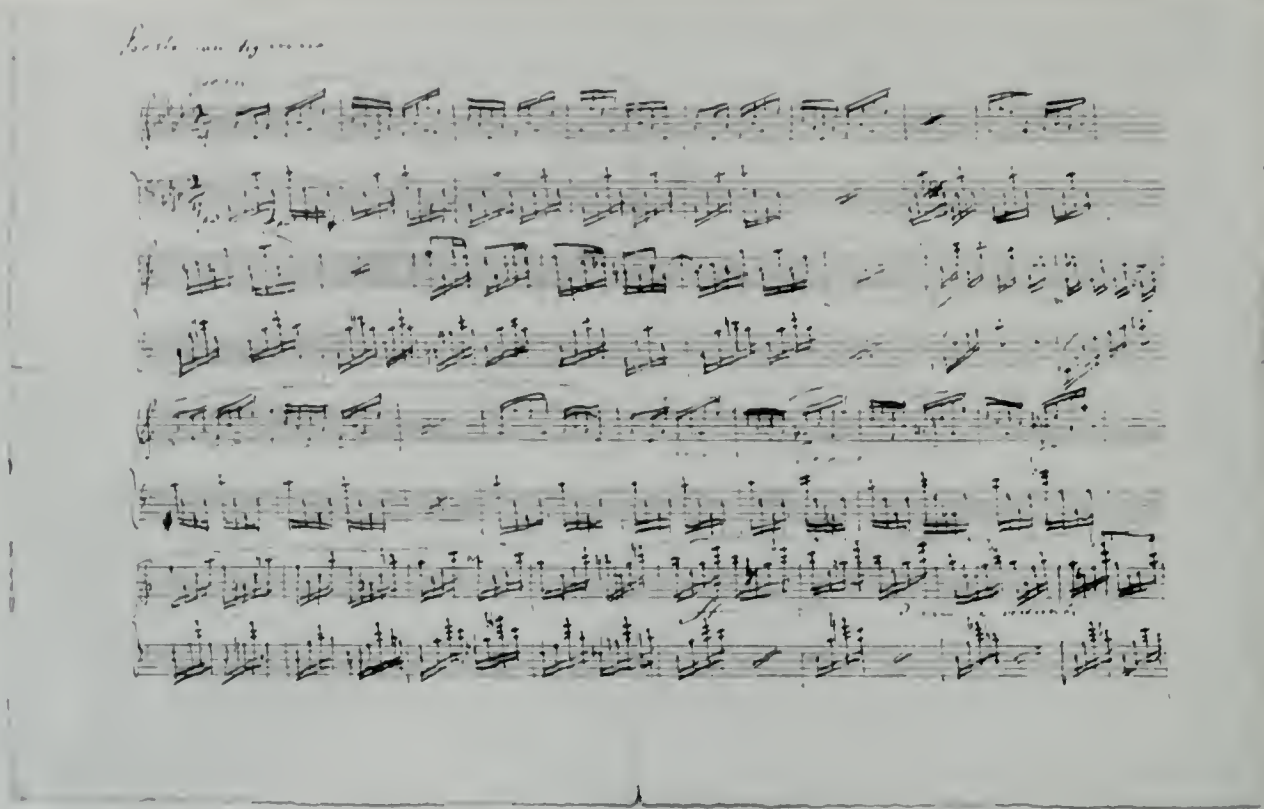
Some composers are represented by numerous manuscripts that are individually and collectively of great historical and musical interest. The Arnold Schoenberg collection contains many important documents, including an unpublished composition not reported in the complete published catalog of his works by Josef Rufer. It will receive its world premiere at the Library's Coolidge Auditorium.

Another major collection is that of Anton von Webern. Dr. Moldenhauer, perhaps best known as the preeminent authority on Webern, is the author, with his wife Rosaleen, of the massive biography *Anton von Webern: A Chronicle of His Life and Work* (New York, 1979) which received ASCAP's Deems Taylor Award. While a great portion of Webern manuscripts were transferred to the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel, Switzerland, a very significant collection of Webern holographs and documents have come to the Library as part of the Moldenhauer bequest.

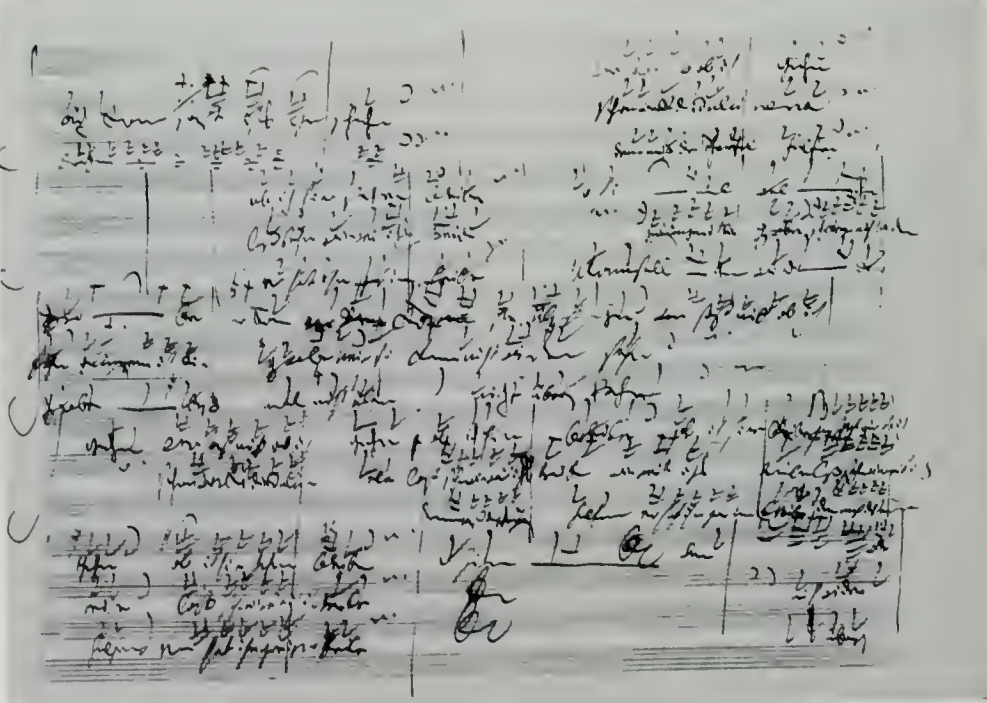
The following is a sampling from a list of composers, musicians, and literary figures who are represented in the several thousand items ranging from single pages of documents to extensive manuscripts of works in full score: George Auric, Johann Sebastian Bach, Jean Barraqué, Béla Bartók, Ludwig van Beethoven, Vincenzo Bellini, Hector Ber-



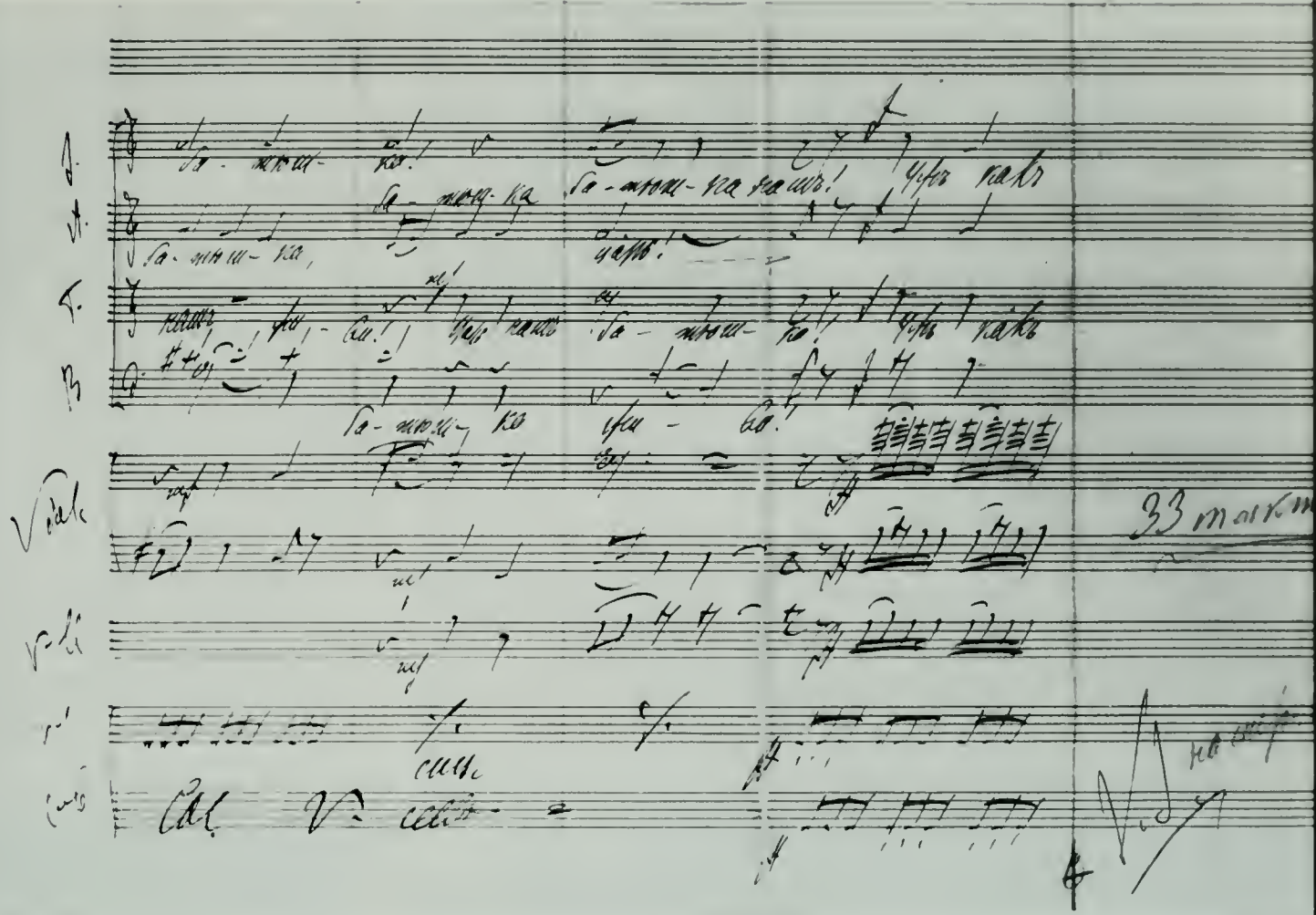
PART OF THE  
holograph  
manuscript of  
Frédéric  
Chopin's  
*Prelude for  
piano in A flat.*  
Authentic  
holographs of  
Chopin are  
rare, there  
being many  
copies by his  
pupil, Julian  
Fontana.  
*Moldenhauer  
Archives,  
Music  
Division.*



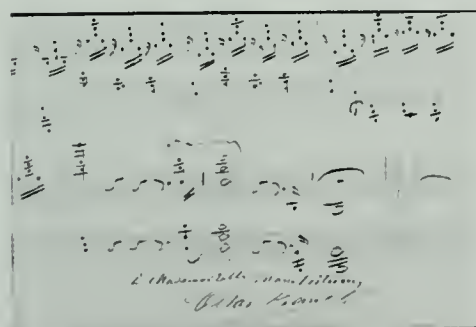
PART OF THE COPY, IN HIS  
characteristically fast and  
flowing hand, by Ludwig  
van Beethoven of the trio  
and sextet from Act II of  
Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.  
Beethoven probably made  
it as a study for the  
composition of the  
ensemble numbers in his  
*Fidelio*. *Moldenhauer  
Archives, Music Division.*







PART OF THE FULL-SCORE HOLOGRAPH OF THE coronation scene from *Boris Godunov* in Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration and arrangement of Modest Mussorgsky's original. Moldenhauer Archives, Music Division.



THE LAST PAGE FROM THE HOLOGRAPH OF CÉSAR Franck's *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* for piano solo. Franck's dedication is to Marie Poitevin, who performed the premiere of this work. Moldenhauer Archives, Music Division.

lioz, Georges Bizet, Ernest Bloch, Pierre Boulez, Anton Bruckner, Charles Burney, Ferruccio Busoni, John Cage, Emmanuel Chabrier, Luigi Cherubini, Frédéric Chopin, Eugène d'Albert, Lorenzo da Ponte, Luigi Dallapiccola, Claude Debussy, Leo Delibes, Frederick Delius, Antonin Dvořák, Manuel de Falla, Gabriel Fauré, César Franck, Giovanni Gabrielli, Federico García Lorca, Roberto Gerhard, George Gershwin, Mikhail Glinka, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Leopold Godowsky, Edvard Grieg, Charles Gounod, George Frideric Handel, Eduard Hanslick, Franz Josef Haydn, Hans Werner Henze, Paul Hindemith, Charles Ives, Otto Klemperer, Edouard Lalo, György Ligeti, Franz Liszt, Albert Lortzing, Witold Lutoslawski, Heinrich Marschner, Felix Mendelssohn, Darius Milhaud, Wolfgang Mozart, Otto Nicolai, Jacques Offenbach, Johann Pachelbel, Niccolò Paganini, Krzysztof Penderecki, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, Cole Porter, Francis Poulenc, Henri Pousseur, Sergei Prokofiev, Giacomo Puccini, Maurice Ravel, Ottorino Respighi, Wallingford Riegger, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Gioacchino Rossini, Anton Rubenstein, Camille Saint-Saëns, George Sand, Arnold Schoenberg, Franz Schubert, Robert

Schumann, Andrés Segovia, Dimitri Shostakovich, Jan Sibelius, Bedřich Smetana, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Johann Strauss, Igor Stravinsky, Germaine Tailleferre, Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky, Georg Philipp Telemann, Ernst Toch, Giuseppe Verdi, Richard Wagner, Anton von Webern, Frank Wedekind, Kurt Weill, Iannis Xenakis, and Gioscfo Zarlino.

The first project to be funded by the Moldenhauer Archives Foundation, according to the bequest, is the publication of an illustrated book based primarily on the Moldenhauer Archives in the Library of Congress and secondarily on the Moldenhauer Archives in other institutions. The book, to cover the history of Western music, will be published by the Library of Congress as a memorial to Rosaleen Moldenhauer, Dr. Moldenhauer's second wife, who died in 1982. Thereafter, the funds in the Moldenhauer Archives Foundation are to be used to augment the archives, publish books and facsimiles based on the archives, and commission new musical compositions based on material in the archives.

Jon Newsom  
Assistant Chief  
Music Division



# "WINGS"



WITH  
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**CHARLES (BUDDY) ROGERS**  
**RICHARD ARLEN**  
**GARY COOPER**

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**YOUTH!** Glorious, impetuous youth! Youth which flew to glory on the wings of war! Youth which dared all to win its measure of fame, to earn its moment of exaltation. "Wings," the story of the young fliers of the American army in France. A picture made by the heroic "aces" of the war, dedicated to the air heroes whose ships never came back. From the story by John Monk Saunders. Directed by William A. Wellman.

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GRAND HOTEL WAS THE FIFTH FILM TO BE AWARDED THE "Best Picture" Oscar (1931-1932).

## FILM

### The Mary Pickford Theater

FOR AVIATION 1927 WAS A watershed year. Charles A. Lindbergh's celebrated transcontinental flight redirected the course of flying from the sport of daredevils to a giant transportation industry. That year Hollywood blew a farewell kiss to the flying aces of World War I in the great Paramount picture *Wings*, starring a boyish Charles "Buddy" Rogers and the "It Girl" flapper, Clara Bow.

The year 1927 also marked the birth of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which would become the industry's own arbiter of quality and would bestow its first "Best Picture" Oscar on *Wings*. To mark the Academy's sixtieth anniversary, the Library of Congress presented screenings of the first ten Oscar-winning pictures from the decade 1927-37 in October and November of 1987. The screenings took place at the Library's Mary Pickford Theater, which since its grand opening in 1983 has become one of the most active facilities devoted to repertory programming in the United States.

Buddy Rogers was on hand for the *Wings* screening and related tales of learning to fly for the role and other reminiscences of action moviemaking in the days before high-tech special effects. Most of the flight scenes in *Wings* were captured by a single camera sitting on the nose of Rogers's plane, which he operated (along with the plane). The ubiquitous flight instructor known as "Van," who crouched in the rear of the aircraft ready to take over if things got out of hand, turns out to be the same Hoyt Vandenberg who later headed the U.S. Air Force.

The remaining nine Oscar winners: *Broadway Melody* (1928-29), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929-30), *Cimarron* (1930-31), *Grand Hotel* (1931-32), *Cavalcade* 1932-33), *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935), *The Great Ziegfeld* (1936), and *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937).

Other series in the Pickford Theater's 1987 season included "Recasting the World: History and Biography in the Feature Film," in which fans were treated to both the ludicrous excesses and ponderous prestige productions that have resulted from Hollywood's attempts to place historical facts within fictional moviemaking; a six-month tribute to Cary Grant with screenings that displayed the development and range of his versatility and craftsmanship, from his



journeyman years through the flowering of screwball comedy; a series made in and about postwar America; and screenings presented in connection with the Duke Ellington International Festival.

In the time since the Pickford's grand opening in 1983, over nine hundred films have been presented to an ever-increasing number of patrons. The mailing list for the quarterly Pickford schedule now exceeds six thousand names, and during 1987 alone more than twelve thousand patrons viewed 182 evening programs. A number of special events held during 1987 attracted additional audiences. These included the world premiere of the Burgess Meredith film *The Afterglow*, a moving tribute to poet Robert Frost, and an official cultural film exchange arranged between the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The programs of the Pickford draw on what is generally acknowledged to be the largest collection of film and television works in the United States. A large per-

centage of these materials are old and must be copied in some preservation format before they can be shown to the public. The do this the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division (M/B/RS) maintains both a Magnetic Recording Lab and a Motion Picture Lab (located in Dayton, Ohio) for the purpose of conserving unique films and TV broadcasts. Essential to these operations is the Quality Control Section of the M/B/RS, which works with the two laboratories to insure that preservation copies are of the highest quality. The results of their combined efforts are regularly displayed in the Pickford Theater and in other archives and at film festivals around the world.

## POETRY AND LITERATURE

FOR ALMOST HALF A CENTURY the consultantship in poetry at the Library of Congress has been the most

prominent position in American poetry. This prominence was enhanced in late 1985 with the enactment of federal legislation to recognize the position as "equivalent to that of Poet Laureate of the United States" and have it henceforward carry the title of Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry. Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin appointed Robert Penn Warren, perhaps the most honored of living American writers, to the "new" post for its 1986-1987 term. These events provoked a media stir as discussions of (among other things) Mr. Warren, the English laureateship, and the place of poetry in American life filled the newspapers and airwaves.

But among the literary community—not least of all Warren himself (who had served previously as Poetry Consultant in 1944-1945)—the question remained: was an American Poet Laureateship (even a nominal one) necessary? For decades the answer had seemed to be no. When it finally came about, it did so abruptly and almost casually, through an

ROBERT PENN WARREN, THE LIBRARY'S FIRST POET LAUREATE CONSULTANT IN POETRY (1986-1987).







RICHARD WILBUR WAS APPOINTED THE LIBRARY'S POET LAUREATE CONSULTANT IN POETRY FOR THE 1987-1988 TERM.

amendment to a routine reauthorization bill. The title and appointment by the Librarian of Congress were the result of the kind of legislative compromise common to a democratic society. Yet the job itself remains essentially the same, with responsibilities that are largely defined by the incumbent and—pointedly—carry no added obligation whatever to “write an ode on the death of someone’s kitten,” as Warren handily put it.

Four basic influences shaped the position as it now exists: (1) the tradition of the English poet laureate; (2) the growing number of state poets laureate; (3) the Consultants in Poetry at the Library of Congress; and (4) the dedication and persistence of Senator Spark Matsunaga (D-Hawaii) on behalf of a laureateship. Although creation of a laureateship changed little about the position itself, it drastically changed perceptions, and there will be added scrutiny of succeeding appointments, for better or worse. Among most there is a wait-and-see attitude about the actual impact.

The major philosophical objection leveled at the laureateship is that America is not a homogeneous society susceptible to comprehensive poetic embrace, not even to the extent that an individual state may be thought to be. (In this respect the prospect of a succession of laureates may be a virtue.) Nevertheless, the Poet Laureate seems to be here to stay, and since the Library of Congress intends to maintain its one- and/or two-year pattern of appointment, by the year 2000 the United States is likely to have as many laureates and former laureates as the state of Kentucky has now. Robert Penn Warren, eschewer of laureateline poetry, marked his term with an opening celebration and readings by himself and a number of other poets and a closing lecture on the poetry of Herman Melville.

Richard Wilbur, a widely renowned poet, critic, and translator, was appointed to the laureateship for its 1987-1988 term. He had first read his poems at the Library of Congress in 1957, and two years later he lectured on “The House of Poe” in an influential essay on a writer with whom Mr. Wilbur has frequently concerned himself. His most recent appearance at the Library was in 1983, in a program celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Academy of American Poets.





JAMES DICKEY, MAXINE KUMIN, STEPHEN SPENDER, AND ANTHONY HECHT AT THE POETRY CONSULTANTS' REUNION



HOWARD NEMEROV WAS APPOINTED THE POET Laureate Consultant in Poetry in September 1988.

## Consultants' Reunion

During the last three days of March 1987, thirty American poets took part in two related observances at the Library of Congress. Such a concentration of poets had occurred only twice before in the Library's history, with the 1978 Consultants' Reunion and the 1962 National Poetry Festival. Fifteen former consultants in Poetry to the Library of Congress gathered for a second Consultants' Reunion March 30–31, giving public readings in the Coolidge Auditorium and meeting the press and public in the Great Hall. The gathering of Consultants was to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the position of Consultant in Poetry. In attendance were Reed Whittemore, Stephen Spender, Stanley Kunitz, James Dickey, Richard Eberhart, William Jay Smith, Josephine Jacobsen, Maxine Kumin, Howard Nemerov (who was appointed the third Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry in September 1988), Karl Shapiro, Gwendolyn

Brooks, Anthony Hecht, and Daniel Hoffman. Only two living Consultants, Leonie Adams and Robert Penn Warren, were unable to attend.

On March 29, fifteen "younger poets," each one chosen by one of the former Consultants, read in the Coolidge Auditorium in a program jointly sponsored by the Library and the National Endowment for the Arts. This program was "in celebration of Robert Penn Warren, the nation's first Poet Laureate."

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

A monthly Calendar of Events which describes the concerts, films, poetry and literature readings, and other performing arts events at the Library is available without charge, upon request, from:

The Library of Congress  
Information Office  
Washington, D.C. 20540  
202-707-2905



# RESEARCH FACILITIES

## AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### The Performing Arts Reading Room

LOCATED ON THE FIRST FLOOR of the James Madison Memorial Building, this reading room provides access, in one location, to music manuscripts, videotapes, and recorded discs and cassettes, as well as to reference specialists in music and broadcasting.

Researchers here have available to them books about music, nearly six million pieces of sheet music spanning the history of music in America from the eighteenth century to yesterday's copyright deposits, complete individual collections like 12,500 opera librettos collected by a single man, and, of course, the rarities of manuscript materials and musical instruments.

The recorded sound collection—some 1.3 million items—covers the whole history of sound recordings, from wax cylinders to compact audio discs. It, too, encompasses a number of individual collections, like the Museum of Broadcasting-National Broadcasting Company Collection, which covers the period from 1933 to 1970.

*Hours: 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Saturday.*

### Motion Picture and Television Reading Room

RESEARCHERS HAVE ACCESS TO the film and television collections of the Library of Congress through the Motion Picture and Television Reading Room on the third floor of the James Madison Memorial Building.



The Library has an unusually strong collection of films produced before 1915, including the Paper Print Collection—films originally deposited for

copyright as photographs printed on rolls of paper and later reconverted to film. The Theodore Roosevelt Collection of 380 titles, which is especially valuable





THE PERFORMING ARTS READING ROOM.

for revealing the political and social history of the early twentieth century, and the more than seven hundred early titles in the American Film Institute Collection are also among these early films.

The motion picture collections also include several thousand films produced in Germany, Japan, and Italy between 1930 and 1945, and, of course, films by all American studios.

In 1949, the Library began to collect films made for television as part of its motion picture collections. Many copyrighted television programs are now being deposited on film and videotape. In combination with gifts, purchases, and exchanges, these deposits increase the Library's film and television collections by several thousand new titles each year.

There are some restrictions on the use of the film and television collections. They are not available for public projection, loan, or rental, although copies of individual items may be made under certain circumstances.

*Hours:* 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday.

## Performing Arts Library at the Kennedy Center

A section of the Music Division, the Performing Arts Library is a joint project with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington. The Performing Arts Library is a small reference facility located in the Kennedy Center and is linked to the Library of Congress Computerized Catalog. It houses a six thousand-volume reference collection on music, dance, theater, film, and broadcasting, as well as over three hundred current periodicals, the 2,800-disc White House Record Library, the 6,000-LP Lon Tuck collection, videotapes, posters, and an extensive vertical file. A remote audio link provides access to sound recordings in the Library's collections. The Performing Arts Library provides artists and designers working at the Kennedy Center access to the basic research tools of their craft, and it offers performers and visitors alike a window into the much more extensive collections in the performing arts located in the Performing Arts Reading Room at the Library of Congress. The Performing Arts Library is open to the public and can accommodate forty-four readers.

*Hours:* 11:00 A.M. to 8:30 P.M., Tuesday through Friday; 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Saturday.



## Three Decades of Television

A Catalog of Television Programs Acquired by the Library of Congress 1949–1979

*Compiled by Sarah Rouse and Katharine Loughney*

Although in America television is only some forty years old, it has become such a vital part of our lives that we can barely conceive of a pretelevision world. Now, with the publication of this unique catalog describing the Library's television holdings acquired from 1949–1979, readers have not only a valuable reference tool, but an evocative compendium of what television offered during those years.

The almost twenty thousand entries provide synopses of fiction and nonfiction programs, genre and broad subject terms, cast and production credits, and

## Performing Arts PUBLICATIONS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

copyright and telecast information. An extensive name and subject index, as well as over forty illustrations further enhance the usefulness of this guide.

This catalog shows how the television collection of the Library began—slowly building into a solid foundation for the study of American television programming. "Meet the Press," "Original Amateur Hour," "All in the Family," documentaries on myriad topics, including

Watergate and the Vietnam War, movies made for television, and entertainment specials—all are included among the entries in this 688-page, hard-cover publication.

*Three Decades of Television* will be of particular interest and use to international archives, broadcasting networks, historians, librarians, mass communication scholars, sociologists, political scientists, educators, biographers, and scholars studying popular culture.

Stock Number: S/N 030-000-00185-1

Price: \$51.00

## Music for Silent Films 1894–1929

A Guide

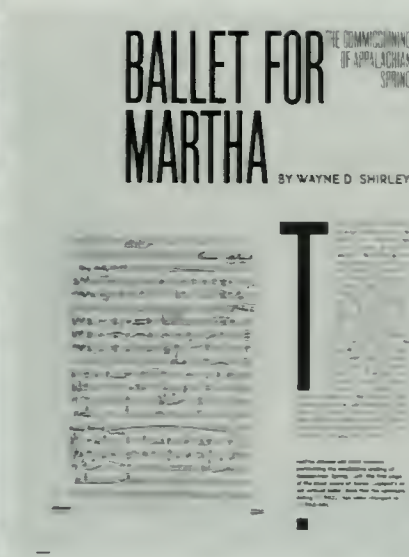
*By Gillian B. Anderson*

The musical accompaniment to silent films is an integral part of the films themselves. Preservation of scores and cue sheets should ideally go hand in hand with film preservation. Unfortu-



FROM MUSIC FOR SILENT FILMS, 1894–1929.





nately, this aspect has been long neglected as film archives have been overwhelmed with the burden of transferring thousands of nitrate films to more durable safety stock before they deteriorate.

In an effort to preserve the equally vital silent film scores and make them more widely available, the Music Division of the Library of Congress has microfilmed the silent film music of two significant collections, its own and that of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This is a guide to locating scores and cue sheets from those collections.

An introductory essay about the nature, history, and presentation of the musical accompaniments provides the context for these artifacts and the guide which follows. The guide is organized alphabetically by film title, with each of the 1,047 entries containing a descriptive paragraph and locating information. Items located in other well-known collections are given in several appendixes, and the generous sampling of photographs shows scores, cue sheets, famous film musicians, showmen, theater organs, film orchestras, movie theaters, and film music in the making.

Stock Number: S/N 030-000-00199-1

Price: \$27.00

## Performing Arts Annual 1987

Edited by Iris Newsom

In anecdotes and analysis, photo essays, and carefully documented research the

1987 *Performing Arts Annual* offers a variety of articles on the performing arts collections and activities at the Library of Congress.

The *Annual* looks at Hollywood scriptwriters during the Golden Age of the studio system; observes the production of the television classic "Omnibus"; brings to life the accomplishments of the Federal Theatre Project; celebrates the musical legacy of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge; recounts the unusual story behind the creation of the ballet *Appalachian Spring*; continues the story of the novel movie "career" of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa; and examines the influence of films on popular perceptions of the U.S. presidency.

The year's outstanding performing arts events at the Library are also reviewed, including the premiere of a work by composer David Raksin commissioned by the Library, a new performance of Bach's *Art of the Fugue* by the Juilliard Quartet, and screenings of films based on works of Shakespeare and Dickens. The book also contains a reminiscence by poetry consultant Gwendolyn Brooks at the close of her tenure.

An engaging mix of information and entertainment, this copiously illustrated volume provides excellent resource material for students of the performing arts—as well as enjoyment for all performing arts enthusiasts.

Stock Number: S/N 030-001-00120-2

Price: \$21.00

Copies of the *Performing Arts Annual* 1986 are still available. This volume fea-

tures articles on the legendary American diva Geraldine Farrar; dance on film; design motifs in Fritz Lang's *Die Nibelungen*; movie palaces of yesteryear; stock company life in the twenties; and Pancho Villa's rise to film stardom.

Stock Number: S/N 030-001-00115-6

Price: \$18.00

## Early Motion Pictures The Paper Print Collection in the Library of Congress

By Kemp R. Niver

Edited by Bebe Bergsten, with an  
Introduction by Erik Barnouw

A comprehensive, annotated catalog of over three thousand films made between 1895 and 1915, *Early Motion Pictures* reveals to the reader a primary source for the study of motion picture photography in America, England, France, and Denmark.

The films described in detail in this 509-page, clothbound book cover a vast variety of people, places, and objects. Events covered range from America's Cup races, baseball games, parades, battleship launchings, and Bengal Lancer charges to political rallies and conferences, and dance and theater performances. The geographical and architectural range of the material is astonishing.

*Early Motion Pictures* was written by



cameraman Kemp R. Niver, who was given an Oscar in 1954 for developing ways to recreate these priceless old films from their only surviving manifestation—paper contact prints submitted to the Copyright Office in the Library of Congress at a time when the copyright law covered photographs but not motion pictures. Completely familiar with all the cataloged films, Mr. Niver gives the reader a synopsis of the plot and information on locale, sets, and costumes for each. Forty-five of his favorite stills are included in the book, as are an exhaustive name and subject index and a credit list of actors and actresses, cameramen, directors, scriptwriters, and authors.

This important book on a unique collection belongs in the library of all those interested in film and social history.

Stock Number: S/N 030-001-00110-5

Price: \$24.00

## Wonderful Inventions

Motion Pictures,  
Broadcasting, and  
Recorded Sound at the  
Library of Congress

Edited by Iris Newsom

This collection of essays, pictures, and music (two records accompany the book) celebrates the various progeny and cousins of Edison's phonograph (deemed "a wonderful invention" by *Scientific American* in 1877), their development, and the ways in which they continue to shape our cultural life and consciousness.

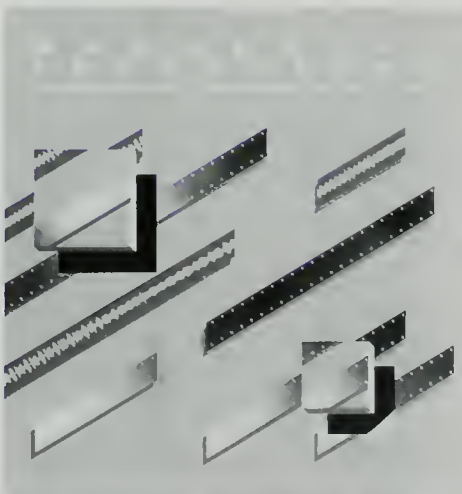
Drawing on the vast collections of the Library of Congress, the authors bring to life the turbulent and colorful history of these media. From a variety of perspectives they describe the infancy of the recording and film industries and the emergence of a conscious art form among the people who worked in and developed it. The essays are enhanced by more than four hundred illustrations, and the two twelve-inch records with the book present selections from film scores discussed in articles on Hollywood film music.

The Library's collections of movies, recordings, and related media provide a priceless record of our cultural heritage. The generous sampling brought together in *Wonderful Inventions* will entertain and inform the scholar and casual reader alike.

Stock Number: S/N 030-001-00109-1

Price: \$40.00

## PERSPECTIVES ON JOHN PHILIP SOUSA





## Perspectives on John Philip Sousa

Edited and with an Introduction by Jon Newsom

The phenomenal career of John Philip Sousa is examined from musical, historical, and personal vantage points in this collection of seven essays. Occasioned by the wealth of original Sousa material in the Library's Music Division, it reveals America's March King as a man of many and diverse accomplishments beyond those of his popular legend.

Included are a look at social and cultural aspects of Sousa's America; an appreciation of Sousa's compositional genius; some lively observations by John Philip Sousa III; an examination of the crucial role played by Sousa's manager David Blakely; an analysis of the march tradition to which Sousa was heir; and a conductor's view of Sousa's most important works.

Also included is an evocative photo essay that conveys the time, place, and style in which Sousa worked and thrived.

Stock Number: S/N 030-001-00103-2

Price: \$17.00



GLORIA'S ROMANCE, WITH A FILM SCORE BY JEROME Kern, starred Billie Burke in a tale of love and society in Palm Beach. The score can be heard on the Library's compact disc recording.

## ORDERING INFORMATION

All books advertised in this section can be ordered from:

The Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, D.C. 20402

Stock number (S/N) and payment must accompany each order.

Checks or money orders should be payable to Superintendent of Documents. Payment may also be made by MasterCard, VISA, or Choice credit cards. If this method is used, include the credit card number and expiration date on the order.

**In Person:** Books may be purchased at Government Printing Office bookstores in: Atlanta, Birmingham, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas,

Denver, Detroit, Houston, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Laurel, Md., Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Pueblo, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

Telephone orders may be placed at any GPO bookstore or by calling the order desk in Washington, D.C. at 202/783-3238.

**Discounts.** A discount of 25 percent is allowed on purchases of 100 or more copies of a single title. The same discount applies to an order of any quantity from a bookdealer so long as it is sent to the dealer's normal place of business.

**DO NOT send your order to the Library of Congress. The Library is not permitted to handle mail orders for these publications.**

## Two Compact Disc Recordings

*Our Musical Past, Volume 3:* The Symphonic Poems of Edward MacDowell, including *Hamlet and Ophelia* and *Lancelot and Elaine*. Originally made in 1965-1966 by Karl Krueger and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, these recordings have been digitally remastered by the Library of Congress Recording Laboratory and are accompanied by a sixteen-page booklet of notes and musical examples provided by musicologist Dolores Pesce.

To those who know MacDowell principally as the composer of brief, impressionistic piano pieces, the symphonic poems will reveal a composer at home in large symphonic forms and with a sure ear for orchestral color. Those who know MacDowell through his often-performed Second Piano Concerto will find these pieces worthy companions to that dashing work. Any listener interested in American orchestral music will find these works, not otherwise currently available on record, to be an important part of American musical history. Compact disc, \$14.95; also available on cassette, \$8.95.

*Our Musical Past, Volume 2:* Two Silent Film Scores. Victor Herbert: *The Fall of a Nation*, and Jerome Kern: *Glo-*

*ria's Romance*. The first CD to be issued by the Library of Congress features excerpts from two 1916 film scores of lasting significance, performed in their original orchestral format. The works are recorded digitally and feature Frederick Fennell conducting the MusicCrafters.

While no print of either film is known to survive today, the music remains fresh and engaging. Jerome Kern's nostalgic score for *Gloria's Romance*, a tale of love and society in Palm Beach, suggests the "society music" that might have been heard at a Florida resort. *The Fall of a Nation* was a blood-and-thunder tale of the invasion of America by an unspecified European power, and Victor Herbert's music reflects much of its gripping subject matter. An illustrated twelve-page brochure is also included. Compact disc, \$14.95; also available on cassette, \$8.95.

**PLEASE NOTE: SPECIAL ORDERING INFORMATION FOR THE ABOVE RECORDINGS ONLY:** Please make check or money order payable to the Library of Congress, and send with requested title and quantity to: Public Services Office, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Fourth class mail is postpaid. Any other postal rate must be prepaid by the customer.



